

2017

When Personalities Dominate, Stability Fails: Great Britain's Shifting North American Military Strategy, 1768-1775

Anna Page
apage2@wellesley.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.wellesley.edu/thesiscollection>

Recommended Citation

Page, Anna, "When Personalities Dominate, Stability Fails: Great Britain's Shifting North American Military Strategy, 1768-1775" (2017). *Honors Thesis Collection*. 510.
<https://repository.wellesley.edu/thesiscollection/510>

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Thesis Collection by an authorized administrator of Wellesley College Digital Scholarship and Archive. For more information, please contact ir@wellesley.edu.

When Personalities Dominate, Stability Fails: Great Britain's Shifting North American Military Strategy, 1768-1775

Anna Skae Page

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the
Prerequisite for Honors
in History
under the advisement of Katherine Grandjean

April 2017

© 2017 Anna S. Page

Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank my advisor, Kate Grandjean, who deserves endless gratitude for not only her time and expertise but also her patience. From classes to this thesis, thank you for tolerating my unprompted brainstorming sessions and random drop-ins. More than this, thank you for introducing me to the beautiful complexity of history. You empowered me to find my unique perspective and voice. None of this would be possible without your mentorship.

To two more scholars, I give my unending thanks. First is Nicholas Murray of the Naval War College. Dr. Murray showed me the applications of history while simultaneously cautioning me to uphold the integrity of the discipline. Second is Francis Gavin of MIT. Allowing my naïve self to stumble into your course on the causes of war opened my mind to a world possibilities. To the both of you, thank you for your edits, continued mentorship, and wisdom.

The next acknowledgment is of everyone, from my parents and friends to professors and employers, who listened to me ramble about this project or any number of my (arguably pointless) ideas. To the Wellesley History Department, particularly Guy Rogers, thank you for teaching me to never overlook the human dimension of history. Endless appreciation to all the professors, more generally, who: allowed me to explore my interests in warfare and conflict in various disciplines (especially Susan Skeath and Catia Confortini), even if they did not necessarily align with the course; come to office hours, even if you never had me in a class (thank you, Stacie Goddard); and never gave up on me, even when I was obviously lost. Every ounce of encouragement motivated me daily on this journey.¹

Spending a year focusing on leadership, failure, and distraction enabled me to reflect extensively on each topic. This thesis exposed me to the infallibility of mankind. It taught me that, when it comes to leadership, history teaches lessons for contemporary leaders. Paradoxically, writing a thesis on failure only left me hopeful as I believe the past holds answers about the present. Finally, while I spent a year analyzing the effects of competing demands on individuals' ability to effectively plan, I cannot help but wonder – what do I miss in my everyday life while trying to juggle a million tasks?

Through it all, I am convinced the secret to success lies in effective teamwork. Which leads me to my final acknowledgement – the Cadets and Cadre of the MIT Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps Paul Revere Battalion and all the soldiers with whom I came in contact over the last four years. The Army operates under a philosophy which professes the necessity of building cohesive teams through mutual trust. Trust, the bedrock of our profession, enables collaboration, dialogue, and ultimately mission success. While the political and military leadership of my thesis may not have exhibited cohesion or trust, I am eternally grateful for my exposure to incredible men and women who not only espouse in words but also uphold in character this tenet of our vocation. Through them, I learned about strategy, decision making, leadership, and – most importantly – humanity, in a way not otherwise possible.

¹ Unofficial acknowledgement of Margaret Dalton ('17) for pointing out that the subtext of my thesis is actually 100+ pages discussing men who seemed to not deliberately plan, inaccurately understood a situation, and refused to collaborate. Thus, an alternate title for the thesis is: "A Case Study on Why Women Should Run Empires: Great Britain's Shifting North American Military Strategy, 1768-1775."

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements...	2
Introduction...	4-12
Chapter I: The Decision Makers...	13-39
Chapter II: The Neighbors...	40-70
Chapter III: The Market...	71-94
Conclusion...	95-99
Appendixes...	100-103
Bibliography...	104-110

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Figures

Figure 1. Governmental Structure...	13
Figure 2. "Self-Sufficing" Model...	75
Figure 3. Public Entity Model...	79
Figure 4. Colonial Unrest Model...	84
Appendix 1. Timeline...	100-101
Appendix 2. Shifts in Strategy by Decision Maker...	102
Appendix 3. Empire Events and Relative Magnitude of Distraction...	103

Introduction

*“No plan of operations extends with any certainty beyond first contact with the main hostile force...”*²

The large schooner sailed into Boston Harbor in late September of 1768 after completing its long, perilous journey across the Atlantic Ocean. Anxiety, excitement, and a sense of duty lingered in the air as the lines were cast ashore and the ship docked. The Loyalist soldiers on board moved into formation. Standing in their ranks, they prepared to disembark. Each man knew his mission directed by the Crown – “support and protect the Civil Magistrates, and the Officers of His Majesty’s Revenue.” Military force was not to be used; rather, the Crown dispatched his Regulars solely to aid civil authorities in *their* administration of the “Preservation of the publick Peace, and the due Execution of the Laws.”³ The arrival of troops in Boston brought Great Britain’s North American military campaign into the heart of the King’s America. Recovering from fighting the Seven Years’ War, wanting to protect the British officials in the colonies, and seeking to stabilize its North American holdings, Great Britain resolved to repair the devolving relationship with its colonial subjects. Little did the Regulars know that, not seven years later in 1775, they would engage in prolonged armed conflict with the rebellious colonists.

For months before the landing, Massachusetts Bay Governor Francis Bernard, Commander in Chief Thomas Gage, and Secretary of State the Earl of Hillsborough, debated heavily whether His Majesty’s forces would deploy to New England. Secretary Hillsborough made the administrative case to Governor Bernard arguing that, to those in London, “it is but too

² Quotation often attributed to Helmut von Moltke the Elder in his essay “On Strategy.” There is discrepancy over the accuracy of this attribution. The quotation is oft paraphrased. This is one paraphrase.

³ “Lords Journals,” 24 November 1767-25 September 1770, Vol. 32, 8 GEO. III-10 GEO III, HL/PO/JO/2/32. General Thomas Gage confirmed his understanding of this stability mission in a letter to Secretary Hillsborough dated just days before the troops arrived in Boston Harbor. The letter dates 26 September 1768 and relays General Gage’s promise to conduct “measures to defeat any Treasonable designs, and to support the Constitutional Rights of the King and Kingdom of Great Britain” and that, meanwhile, he would “confine myself solely to the granting such Aids to the Civil Power” (CO 5/86). Note that for all quotations, I have preserved the writer’s original spelling, capitalizing, and punctuation rather than correcting it.

evident, not only from the Accounts contained in your last letters, but also from a Revision of the State of your Government for some Time past, that the Authority of Civil Power is too weak to enforce Obedience to the Laws, and preserve that Peace and good Order which is essential to the Happiness of every state..." Bernard, likely gripping the letter from his superior, must have known what order would come next. Hillsborough's words continued, "His Majesty has thought fit, upon the most mature Consideration of what has been represented by yourself and by the Commissioners of Customs, established at Boston, to direct the Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces in America, to station one Regiment at least in the Town of Boston, and to garrison, and if necessary to repair, the Fort or Castle of William and Mary."⁴ Bernard believed that introducing a military presence in the colony would further stoke the protests, demonstrations, and violent flare-ups which engulfed Boston and the surrounding area since 1765.⁵

Yet, three months after denouncing need for military support, Governor Bernard, with a changed heart, wrote to General Gage and the English authorities in September of 1768: "There has been so many publick and private Declerations of [colonial] intention, to resist the Forces of Great Britain...that I think so time should be lost to provide against them. There have also been Riots at Salem and Newbury against the Custom House Officers, of so violent a nature, that it will require a Military Force to bring the Rioters there to Reason..." After describing the unprecedented violence in his colony, the Governor, seemingly in need of assistance, requested "considerable Reinforcements to the Troops here."⁶

⁴ Hillsborough to Bernard, 11 June 1768, CO 5/765.

⁵ Bernard to Gage, 16 September 1768, CO 5/86. Bernard's description of activity in Boston in 1768: "As the Sons of Liberty kept to continually declaring that no King's Troops should enter Boston, I was apprehensive that the sudden Appearance of Troops would produce temporary mischiefs, before the Troops could get ashore to prevent them...I am informed, at a general meeting it was agreed to rise in opposition; and at a private meeting, it was agreed to attack and take the castle..."

⁶ Ibid.

With Governor Bernard's observations in mind, King George III and his ministry unanimously agreed to send His Majesty's Regular forces, under the command of General Thomas Gage, to stabilize Boston in 1768. Yet, the unity of mind experienced in 1768 did not last long. To the leaders' surprise, the North American colonists continued to reject imperial authority rather than succumb to the show of force as the British political and military Decision Makers predicted.⁷ Uncertain of how to proceed and distracted by other geopolitical and economic threats to the British Empire, the King, Prime Minister, Secretary of State, and Commander in Chief all began to develop their own personal opinions of how to handle the unraveling situation in North America. Britain's top ministers would fail to agree on a common strategy in America until 1774; but by then it was too late to compel the American colonists from resisting British rule. The absence of a coherent plan from London allowed the North American English subjects to rise in defiance of the Crown. Imperial overreach, in addition to other complexities associated with overseeing a global empire, made assembling a cohesive strategy in America even more difficult. Lack of unity over strategy ultimately catalyzed the devolution of what began as a stability operation to maintain peace and support civil authorities to an offensive military operation.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Countless books, journals, movies, and shows exist about the American Revolutionary War. Most of these individually address the personalities of British politicians or generals involved in the War, the disposition of the British Army, British foreign policy in the eighteenth century, or the various components of the economy. Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy provides a comprehensive account of British leadership in his book *The Men Who Lost America*. Pieces on

⁷ "Decision Makers" refers collectively to the five men I identify in Chapter I. This identifier is capitalized because of its specific usage in my thesis.

the military failures of Thomas Gage and the personality of King George III intimately describe their characters. In televised and performed media, HBO's "John Adams," AMC's "Turn: Washington's Spies," and Lin Manuel Miranda's "Hamilton" all offer insight on people associated with the American Revolution. Authors also provide surveys of the development of both the British and American militaries. Reginald Hargreaves documents the Regulars in his *The Bloodybacks: The British Serviceman in North America and the Caribbean 1655-1783* while Michael Pearson writes of the colonial militias in *Those Damned Rebels: The American Revolution as Seen through British Eyes*.

Scholars continue their focused niche, often offering comprehensive surveys, when it comes to foreign policy and economics. Pertinent works include Jeremy Black's *Parliament and Foreign Policy in the Eighteenth Century* and P.J. Marshall's *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, and America c. 1765-1783*. Some works such as Kathleen DuVal's *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* and Claudio Saunt's *West of the Revolution: And Uncommon History of 1776* provide perspective on other emerging conflicts in North America. Economic historians such as Charles Andrews, T.H. Breen, and Ralph Davis discuss British economic policy and the mother country's economic relationship with the colonies. They make the case for economic causes of war. Yet, the geopolitical and economic arguments alone are insufficient. None of this literature explicitly analyzes the effects of foreign policy and economics on the people in power – let alone those in Great Britain.

While these are compelling on their own, only an aggregate view of the people, military, geopolitics, and economics provide a complete depiction of how and why the American Revolution began in 1775. Few aside from John Shy assess how the interconnectedness of these elements affected Great Britain's North American military strategy, and why said strategy of

stability ultimately failed. Yet, even Shy's *Towards Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* does not provide a comprehensive conceptual overview of the geopolitical and economic environments facing the Decision Makers. His works, though comprehensive, focus more on the disposition and capabilities of the British military itself, rather than linking the greater factors and tensions at play.

Moreover, works on the prelude to the War (1768-1775) are slim in and of themselves. Literature carefully assesses the immediate aftermath of the French and Indian War as well, the proximate period before the Revolutionary War, or offers surveys of the eighteenth century, but few works discuss the events of the British Empire in the interwar years. When considering these works, it is also important to note that most scholarship on the American Revolution, particularly in popular culture, is just that – scholarship written by Americans on the American perspective of the Revolutionary War during the years of conflict.

As such, I seek to contribute to the expansive list of literatures about the American Revolution by looking at British strategy and decision making in the prelude to the War from 1768 to 1775. I do this by complementing primary source analysis of correspondences found at the National Archives with the assessments made in the aforementioned literature. I first describe the key players in the prelude to the American Revolutionary War and their personalities.

Chapter I: The Decision Makers is the *who* of who was in power and the *why* of why they made decisions the way that they did. I identified 5 people primarily responsible for the war in North America: George III, Lord North, Earl of Hillsborough, Earl of Dartmouth, and General Gage.

Chapter II: The Neighbors and Chapter III: The Market zoom out from focusing on the personalities and instead put the personalities in context of how the competing demands on the Decision Makers and their responses to geopolitical and economic events threatening the British

Empire from 1768-1775. In these chapters, I use many of the letters of correspondences between people and departments and refer to the personalities and constitutional roles of these individuals to explain *why* the decision makers then acted the way that they did. More generally, this thesis uses the actions of the Decision Makers as a case study through which to develop an understanding of the human dimension of warfare. Remembering that real people who faced personal and logistical puzzles is paramount when considering the coming of the American Revolution.

Rarely does scholarship explore decision making across the British Empire that occurred in Whitehall and London. Previous studies suggest that violence between the motherland and her American subjects erupted solely because of the rebellious colonists. They position New England as the epicenter of British focus in the late eighteenth century. Yet, it is imperative to remember that colonial rebellion fell into a long list of competing demands on the leaders of the British Empire. There is no denying that activity throughout the thirteen North American colonies, especially that in Boston, ultimately pushed the King to declare his subjects in a state of rebellion in October 1775 and declare war by April.⁸

Global superpowers do not simply lose wars – especially to a militia with inferior armaments, training, and manpower. The Americans may have won the Revolutionary War, but theirs is not the only story worth telling. This, then, is the story of the coming of the American Revolutionary War, or the War for American Independence, from the British perspective. This thesis ultimately answers why Britain failed to retain its North American colonies by offering an analysis of British pre-war planning, the problems facing Great Britain from 1768 to 1775, and the global tensions pulling on the Decision Makers.

⁸ King George III, 27 October 1775, Joint Address to Parliament.

The predominating colony-focused narrative oversimplifies the role of the British political and military Decision Makers in the coming of the War for Independence. It overlooks the human dimension of war by not considering personalities, motives, and distractions; thereby failing to remember that the enemy has a say in conflict. Correspondences between the King and the Prime Minister, orders from the Secretaries of State for the Colonies and the Commander in Chief of the British Forces in North America, as well as parliamentary addresses from the Crown all demonstrate that Great Britain was not passively reacting to North American activity. Instead, leaders actively made role-specific decisions about not just North America but also the entire British Empire. Their responses to various events disclose information about where and why each Decision Maker focused his energy. When viewed in aggregate, correspondences also allow for individual opinions regarding the Massachusetts Bay to be tracked over the seven years leading up to the American War of Independence. In the short run, influences meant that priorities and opinions shifted as the administration faced new global and domestic challenges. In the long run, and most detrimental to the Crown, the complexities of running an empire prohibited establishing a cohesive, lasting strategy for North America.

Much of the complexity branding the situation in Boston and the surrounding colonies was due to personal beliefs and motivations of the Decision Makers, rather than deliberate planning, shaping strategy. Historian Ira Gruber expounds on the genesis of strategy in the late 18th century. He offers that, "British leaders developed their strategies in the War for American Independence primarily to suit their understanding of the rebellion, their attitudes toward it, and the special circumstances of the war itself."⁹ This made any North American military strategy

⁹ Ira Gruber, "The Origins of British Strategy in the War for American Independence," *Military History of the American Revolution*, edited by Major Stanley J. Underdal, 38-52 (Colorado: United States Air Force Academy, 1976), 49.

susceptible to failure due to the dominating personalities. Though all Decision Makers expressed unity in the initial decision to send His Majesty's Forces to Boston in 1768 and again unified in 1774 in deciding to attempt to coerce the colonists into submission, disunity over strategy characterized all other years.

Letters from the Colonial and War Offices housed in The National Archives in Kew, England, as well as records in the Parliamentary Archives in London, England demonstrate the difficulty of ruling a truly global empire in the eighteenth century. On the surface, correspondences convey the decorum observed from governing in a hierarchical structure. "Sir" or "My Lord" often begin letters while "Yours," "Your Lordship," or "Most Obedient" conclude the note. Between the lines, however, emerges the multiple competing demands on the military and political Decision Makers. Pertaining to our region of interest, while pages are filled with mentions of the Massachusetts Bay from 1768 to 1775, what is telling is that, proportional to the amount of correspondences and addresses available from this period, mentions of the New England colonies are sparse. Rather, attention is given to domestic happenings, promotions and demotions, European activity, and debates about the North America frontier.

As my analysis of a combination of primary and secondary sources will demonstrate, Boston occupied little of the collective attention of English leaders. In its place emerged a complicated narrative emblematic of the human element of governance and planning. Leaders balanced their enumerated and implicit responsibilities, detailed and conceptual planning, and the political fragility and vulnerability which came with many of their positions. While it is easy to write off the American War of Independence as an epic loss for the "mighty" British Empire, when assessing the human dimension of conflict, the unfocused and non-cohesive approach to handling North America is more understandable. An examination of the personalities and roles

of five British leaders, of the global threats to the British Empire, and of the characteristics of the English economic system combines primary and secondary sources and highlights the competing demands which often overshadowed North America in English dialogues before mid-1774.

Geopolitical and economic threats contributed to influencing the personalities to individually champion competing and constantly shifting strategies of appeasement, conciliation, military suppression, economic sanctions, or swift and forceful action between 1768 and 1774, then again in 1775 immediately preceding the march on Concord. Ultimately, French and Spanish security threats to the British mainland and her colonies coupled with nearly eight years of crippled trade and lost colonial revenue catalyzed the coming of the War for Independence. These events hindered the ability of those in power from 1768 to 1775, the English political and military Decision Makers, to create a unified strategy for North America. This failure to establish an overarching North American strategy led the British military strategy in these colonies to deteriorate from one of stability and support to a strategy of forceful suppression, resulting in the War whose end witnessed a tremendous loss for the British Empire.

Chapter I: The Decision Makers

A Young Monarch, Dutiful Prime Minister, Two Diametric Secretaries, and a Reluctant General

Even in a monarchy, the responsibility of the outbreak of the American War of Independence did not reside with one man. A cacophony of bureaucrats, politicians, and military officials – at all levels of Parliamentary hierarchy – catalyzed the violence across the ocean in 1775. The monarch reigned supreme in this system but did not rule without his advisors. Under him fell the Prime Minister and the Cabinet comprised of the various Secretaries, in one branch. Secretaryship included titles such as: Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, Secretary at War, and Lord of the Admiralty. The colonial governors reported to the Cabinet. Parliament, comprised of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, made the other branch.

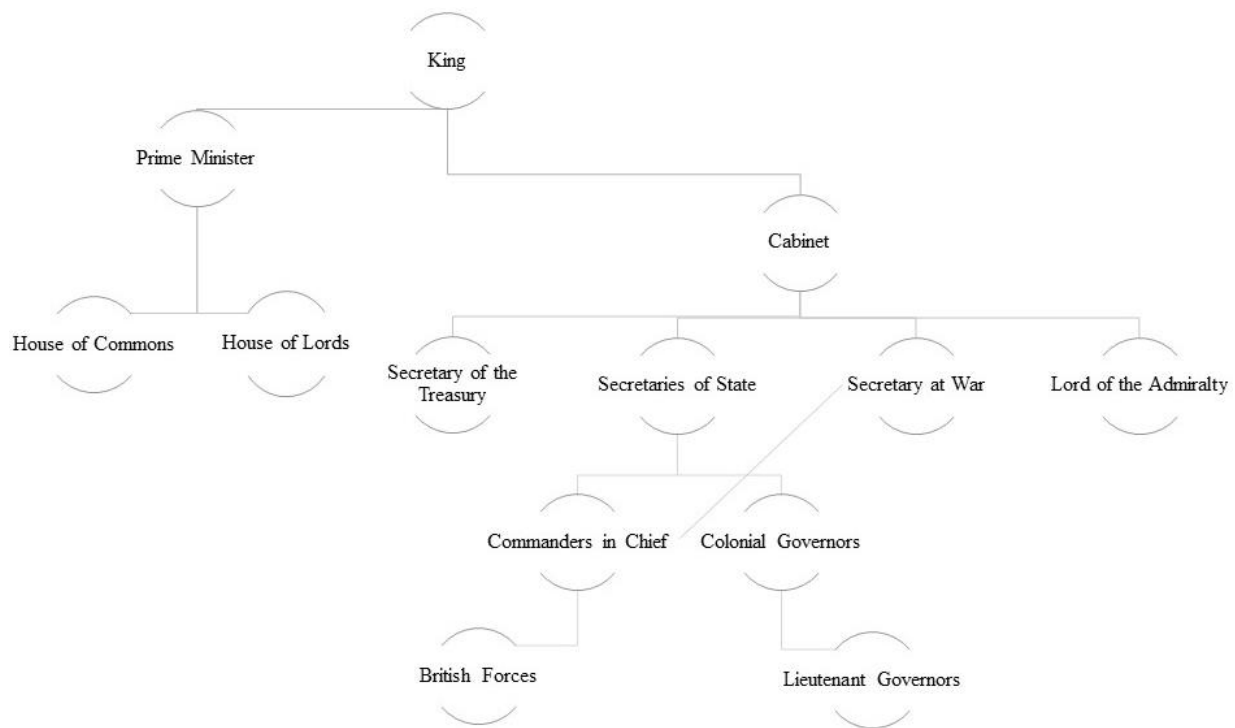


Figure 1. A simplified depiction of the Great Britain's governmental structure 1768-1770. Note the hierarchical structure. The positions most pertinent to this analysis are included in this figure.

Though a hierarchical structure, in chaotic times, roles often blended – a flaw which only increased chaos. Moreover, it was not simply the decision-making systems of the eighteenth

century which enabled war; rather, it was the unique personalities and perspectives of the men who held the positions within the structure that hindered strategic cohesion and enabled war between mother country and colony.

These personalities regularly clashed when making decisions, especially decisions over the North American colonies, creating confusion within the British Empire. As British historian Peter James Marshall explains, "Uncertainty reflected the quandary of political leaders in both government and opposition in Britain who wanted to avoid conflict with the colonies while affirming the supreme authority of Parliament to govern America."¹⁰ Here Marshall identifies the penultimate conflict within and among the administration in this analysis. The differing opinions on how to enforce the supremacy of Parliament, which differed not only from person to person but also changed by person as events shook the British Empire, dictated many of the ministerial debates from 1768 to 1775.

Thus, personalities mattered in the prelude to the American War of Independence. Debates over courses of action became internal, ideological struggles, not just political discussions. The King primarily received recommendations from the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and the Commander in Chief of the British Forces in North America. Each of these people held their own beliefs about the British Empire and her relationship with her subjects. Additionally, they all came from different backgrounds and therefore approached their positions with their own biases, propensity for risk, and processes for acquiring information and making decisions. How and why Great Britain declared war on her own colonies can only be understood once the personalities of five key men holding various positions in the British political and military administrations from 1768-1775 are understood.

¹⁰ P.J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India and America c. 1750-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 318

The King: King George III, a Conflicted Hawk

King George III, the reigning monarch of Great Britain, sat behind his large wooden desk in his office at his palace in Whitehall. Gazing out his window at St. James' Park and the city of London, he reviewed his October address to Parliament. Between paragraphs, King George paused. The weight of the words of the address must have weighed heavily on the King's mind. *How did events come to this?* He could have pondered. Just one year earlier, tensions in North America were seeming to subside. This pleased George as bloodshed was the King's last resort based on his orders to for the Regulars to aid the civil authorities in maintaining the public peace. Yet, by October of 1775, everything changed.

The shift in the King's mindset of how to handle the North American situation meant that no longer would he champion his prior policies of appeasement or even coercion; rather, military suppression seemed to be the only effective course of action. The Monarch began reading again. "The object is too important," his speech suggested about the North American colonies. "The spirit of the British nation too high, the resources with which God hath blessed her too numerous, to give up so many colonies which she has planted with great industry, nursed with great tenderness, encouraged with many commercial advantages, and protected and defended at much expence of blood and treasure..." King George III reflected on the might of the British Empire. Starting again he expressed, "It is now become the part of wisdom, and (in its effects) of clemency, to put a speedy end to these disorders by the most decisive exertions. For this purpose, I have increased my naval establishment, and greatly augmented my land forces..."¹¹ With this speech, the Monarch informed Parliament of his decision to prepare for armed conflict.

¹¹ King George III, 27 October 1775, Joint Address to Parliament.

He again gazed out his office window at the peaceful, lush green gardens of St. James' Park. The serenity with which the Londoners wandered through the fall-colored gardens, seemingly oblivious to the current tumult tearing apart their beloved empire, amazed George. He did not want to upset the status quo – yet, he himself no longer even knew what the status quo for an empire the size of England's was. Normally the King would not jointly address the houses of Parliament unless convening a session. October of 1775, however, was no ordinary October. Colonial upheaval in North America, external threats from England's neighbors France and Spain, a recovering economy, and a divided Ministry clouded George's mind. The King called the House of Commons and the Lords together early in an emergency session to address the state of the American colonies and rally Parliament behind decisively engaging the North American subjects. War was no longer a discussion as it had been before – to George, it inevitably loomed.

Like his predecessors, the Monarch boasted a vast array of interests. Well-versed in topics ranging from agriculture and farming to the arts and sciences, George could relate to most anyone. As a young man, George brought an affable, cheerful, and fresh air to the Crown. He was overall well-liked in personality; and tall, robust, and graceful in demeanor. King George III's interests proved beneficial for social gatherings. Unfortunately, they did not equate to experience in leading an empire.

The third Hanoverian to rule the kingdom of Britain, King George III needed to uphold the reputation of both in his namesake and the responsibility of the reigning monarch. Though he did not unanimously make decisions, the strength of the British Empire fell on the King's shoulders. Considering the scope of the British Empire, this was a large burden for one man to bear. At the time, England exercised influence around the globe. Global power relied on the strength of colonial and territorial holdings. Therefore, when threats jeopardized part of the

King's empire, it was as if the autonomy of England herself was being challenged. George quickly learned this lesson when, at only twenty-two years old, he assumed the throne in 1760 during the height of the Seven Years' War. King George did not boast a strong background in strategic planning during this first global conflict.¹² While he did partake in negotiating the War's end, his lack of experience dictated that he leave strategy to his cabinet and generals, taking a predominate role only in the logistical administration of military affairs.¹³ Thus, not only was the King conditioned to be cautious to commit his nation to conflict, given the tumult of the 1760s; but also, prior to the Revolutionary War, the King did not gain strategic military experience.

Yet, George would not allow his youth and inexperience to damper his patriotism and dedication to serving England. In his ascension, the monarch declared that “‘he was born and educated in the country’ and that he gloried ‘in the name of Briton.’” George III maintained this love of country, a sentiment which dictated emotions and actions, throughout the entirety of the American War of Independence. Indeed, the way the King treated his fellow countrymen mirrored his admiration of his nation. The notable English essayist and biographer Samuel Johnson claimed George to be “‘the first monarch in a hundred years to identify seriously with the interests of his people and try to make friends with his fellow countrymen.’”¹⁴ As Lord Hillsborough, the Secretary of State for the Colonies described to the Governor of Massachusetts Bay in 1768, “‘His Majesty is the tender and affectionate Father of all His Subjects...’”¹⁵ Thus, at least in the beginning of the occupation of Boston, George regarded the North Americans as his

¹² As defined by Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*, a strategic plan is a “plan for the overall conduct of a war” and includes a strategic estimate or considerations given to a “broad range of strategic factors that influence the commander’s understanding of its operational environment and its determination of missions, objectives, and courses of action.”

¹³ Ira D Gruber, “The Origins of British Strategy in the War for American Independence,” *Military History of the American Revolution*, edited by Major Stanley J. Underdal (Colorado: United States Air Force Academy, 1976), 38.

¹⁴ Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 19.

¹⁵ Hillsborough to Bernard, 16 February 1768, CO 5/765.

own and advocated for their well-being. Creating a shared interest between Great Britain and the colonies through a fatherly ruling such as this was of utmost importance to the King.¹⁶

Throughout the period leading to the American War of Independence, the monarch found himself in a precarious position as he balanced his enumerated and expected responsibilities as the King of England with his personal views and desires. Though he sought to “identify” and “make friends with” his subjects, as the monarch, King George III also had a responsibility to govern firmly and uphold the supremacy of Parliament. This tension may have accounted for George’s confliction with how to handle colonial rebellion and susceptible to the opinions of those with whom he surrounded himself. The English constitution charged the monarch with appointing government ministers, to include the Prime Minister.¹⁷ Many of George’s ministers served in politics longer than the King’s reign. This is significant as Kings “probably listened to their subministers far more than their social equals when administration came under discussion.”¹⁸ Thus, if those in King George’s administration – especially his Prime Minister and Secretaries of State – offered their perspective on a situation in the British Empire, George would have been likely to listen and entertain their recommendation. At least when times appeared peaceful.

Ideally, the monarch was meant to be supreme, uninhibited by public pressures, yet still govern in conjunction with his cabinet and Parliament. In describing this partnership for George III, Michael Pearson writes that George “exercised personal executive control of a nation that possessed great expanses of territory thousands of miles away, both to east and west, but he did so only with the cooperation of a careful and often critical parliament.” Finally, the system

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid, 19.

¹⁸ Franklin B Wickwire, *British Subministers and Colonial America, 1763-1783* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), 3-4.

dictated that all orders to the colonies were supposed to come from the King through the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the colonial subjects, themselves.¹⁹ This means that the monarch was rarely free to think and act independently of advice from his administration and the Lords and gentlemen which comprised Parliament.

Foundationally, convention, not law, established the English monarchy, which enabled George III to hold his own opinions and agenda.²⁰ Excitement, expansion, and instability characterized events both internal and external to the British Empire during the period in which King George III reigned. As King, all events which could affect the power of England and, by extension, the power of the monarch, concerned George. Thus, the Monarch's focus necessarily shifted with the world. He could not afford tunnel vision. This is evident in George III's changing attitude towards his North American subjects in the prelude to the American War of Independence.

Before penning his Parliamentary address in 1775, King George truly viewed war in America as avoidable and a last resort. From the time the first troops arrived in Boston in 1768 until 1773, George championed a policy of support and appeasement to his subjects across the Atlantic. His affable character shone through as he tried to identify with the needs of his people, as Samuel Johnson claimed George did. Desiring to be liked and to avoid conflict, George offered conciliatory measures towards his North American colonies. In this period, the King's attention was otherwise diverted as crises emerged throughout his empire. However, in January of 1774 after learning of the incident which historiographies of the War would come to call the Boston Tea Party, the King's attention refocused on North America with a new vengeance. No

¹⁹ Michael Pearson, *Those Damned Rebels: The American Revolution as Seen through British Eyes* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), 14-16.

²⁰ Michael Rush, *Parliamentary Government in Britain* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1981), 32.

longer did he espouse a policy of appeasement. Instead, George III urged coercion to assert the supremacy of Parliament. He still wanted to delay bloodshed with his subjects. Yet, with events in the colonies growing progressively more violent, the King considered other options for maintaining the public peace and ensuring the execution of laws. Over the course of the year, George III's policy morphed into one of suppression on the eve of 1775. Though it would be easy to blame the King of England for the outbreak of the American War of Independence, the story is not that simple. King George did deliver the fateful address to both houses of Parliament; but George did not govern in a vacuum. He was not alone in the decision-making which led to that monumental decision to move forward only with force.

The Prime Minister: Lord North, a Susceptible Dove

Lord North endured numerous long, arduous cabinet meetings in the 1770s. From concerns over continental neighbors, to domestic economic crises, and, finally, worries over English influence in North America, the opinions of the Prime Minister's Secretaries felt relentless. Personally, Frederick would have sought non-violent measures to either coerce, appease, or work with the North American subjects as he thought this approach would most economically benefit the Crown. *At least*, he must have thought, *appeasement would create one less immediate threat to the Empire about which to worry*. Economic crisis caused by the East India Company, relations between Indian and British officials in British India, and Parliamentary debates over how to solve both these issues offered the thinly-stretched man enough material to occupy his attention.

Politically, Lord North knew a solution to the colonial situation would prove much more arduous than simply a decision made by one man. It would require all his Ministers, as each man possessed his own area of expertise and unique focus. The necessity of a multiplicity of perspectives, however, inspired administrative conflict. Debate over the colonies ensued for

the entirety of Lord North's tenure as Prime Minister. At first, he carried the support of the Crown and Parliament. However, as the years progressed and tension escalated, North witnessed the opinions of his peers changing while his did not.

As Frederick North, he was liked by all. The Lord displayed "self-deprecating humor," wit, a jovial demeanor, and humility. His love of literary anecdotes highlighted his intelligence. He also knew Europe well, on both academic and personal levels. Frederick grew up with George; a relationship full of irony given the diametrically opposed views of the Prime Minister and the King regarding the North American colonies by the end of 1774. The Earl of Dartmouth, Secretary of State for the Colonies under Lord North, was the Prime Minister's stepbrother. Thus, North could not separate the personal from the political and felt obligated in his service to the Crown.²¹

As Lord North, the Prime Minister was much less liked and respected by his decision-making counterparts. Historian P.J. Marshall explains that:

North's views and actions were certainly not those of a Prime Minister intent on tyranny in America. He wanted to defuse the situation in the colonies in part to secure the stability of his own government in Britain. He was politically vulnerable for he did not have his own party following but relied upon the support of a coalition of different factions. Furthermore, he was temperamentally averse to confrontation. He had a habit of postponing difficult decisions, hesitating and changing his mind...²²

A very different image of North emerges from this characterization than the jovial Frederick described before. Here, the fragility of the office of the Prime Minister and, specifically of North's power, becomes apparent. Even his contemporaries of echoed the susceptibility of North's character.

²¹ O'Shaughnessy, 48-49.

²² Marshall, 318.

Horace Walpole, Parliament member turned historian, documented his first-person observations of the Prime Minister in his *Memoirs on the Reign of King George the Third*. Walpole writes of North that, “His indolence prevented his forming any plan. His indifference made him leap from one extreme to another; and his insensibility to reproach reconciled him to any contradiction...Lord North engrossed whatever fell in his war, and sometimes was bribed by the Crown to promote Acts, against which he pretended his conscious recoiled.”²³ While telling of North, Walpole’s background must be considered when considering this reflection. A staunch Whig and ex-politician, Walpole may have held personal reasons for writing this scathing testimony of North’s tenure. Even still, it is a valuable account a Fredrick North from a peer within the British political leadership. Walpole highlights key reasons why North, specifically, and the Decision Makers, more generally, failed to establish a cohesive strategy for a majority of the years the military occupied Boston. He first deliberately blames the Prime Minister for the absence of a plan regarding North America. Next, Walpole distinctly points out that the Lord could be easily swayed – a flaw which contributed to confusion amongst the administration amid the myriad distractions occurring between 1768 to 1775. Much of Walpole’s comments about North may truly have been results of the Prime Minister’s character. Some of them, on the other hand, especially that about North’s acquiescence to bribes from King George III, may have been due to the doctrinal role of the Prime Minister in British politics.

The Prime Minister served at mercy of the King and his political party. In overseeing the cabinet, he both managed others – his undersecretaries – and himself, always balancing maintaining the support of the reigning monarch and the majority party.²⁴ The government

²³ Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third*. Vol. 2, Sir Denis le Marchant, ed. (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845), 231.

²⁴ O’Shaughnessy, 57.

system made little distinction between administrator and politician in 18th century England. Rather, the bureaucracy changed as quickly as parties changed in election years.²⁵ Yet, while the people who held cabinet positions may have been temporary, the Cabinet as an institution, was an indelible part of the English government. The Hanoverians themselves codified the permanence of the Cabinet during George I and George II's reigns as King of England. It was under them, too, that power was placed in the hands of politicians.²⁶ Therefore, by George III's rule, the Prime Minister as it was imagined in the late-1700s was still a relatively new concept and susceptible to error. Due to the political nature of the Cabinet, regardless of his own opinions, North needed to propose acts favorable to the Crown and his political party if he wished to maintain relevance.

When he first entered office, North removed the Townshend Duties except for the Tea Act because North believed that these acts economically hurt Britain more than punished the colonists. He also overrode the Currency Act of 1764, and allowed for western expansion. Seemingly paradoxically, North sponsored the East India Tea Act in 1773 and the Coercive Acts in 1774. However, he did so again only for economic reasons. Lord North claimed that "arrangements regarding the importation of tea into America, provided in the act of 1773, had been made in the interests of the merchants – that is, for the benefit of the East India Company."²⁷ This economic, nonviolent reasoning fueled many of the Prime Minister's policies. He thought that imposing punishments on all North America would lead to colonists isolating the Bostonians and pressuring them to instead work with Parliament.²⁸ Much to everyone's chagrin, this plan failed. North stood perplexed. As he expressed just three years earlier to the House of

²⁵ Wickwire, 5.

²⁶ Ibid, 32.

²⁷ Dora Mae Clark, *British Opinion and the American Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), 226.

²⁸ O'Shaughnessy, 51-54.

Commons, peace remained his end goal. In front of the House chamber, North offered that he would “most cheerfully would I give [my income] all – not only the part which I derive from the public purse, but my own private fortune – if I could only thereby accelerate an honourable, speedy peace.”²⁹ The Lord seemed willing to forgo his personal comfort if it meant stability in the British Empire. He championed the supremacy of Parliament to accomplish peace, but questioned the appropriateness of escalation of force. By 1774, Lord North almost entirely shrunk from the prospect of war. As he disclosed to King George III that same year, he feared that if Great Britain did not risk something, then “all is over.”³⁰ The Coercive Acts were his proposition for providing an alternate form of pressure on the rebellious colonists.

Then, in February of 1775, North shifted from a policy of coercive legislation to colonial conciliation. He offered his Conciliatory Proposal for the American colonies in a final attempt at preventing war. Both the title of this resolution as well as the wording suggest that Lord North hoped to placate both the interests of his peers as well as the North American subjects. The Conciliatory Proposal resolved that if “his Majesty and the two Houses of Parliament” approve an American colony’s legislation to “make provision...for contributing their proportion to the common defence... for the support of the Civil Government, and the Administration of Justice, in such Province or Colony” and if that legislation levied or increased a “Duty, Tax, or Assessment,” that “the nett produce of the duties last mentioned to be carried to the account of such Province or Colony respectively.”³¹ By his Conciliatory Proposal, Lord North created a solution to the problem of asserting colonial authority in the colonies while meeting their demands about equitable taxation. He left the Crown and parliament the ultimate

²⁹ John Heneage Jesse, *Memoirs of the Life and Reign of King George the Third*, Vol. I (London: Tinsley Brothers, 1867), 489.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 560.

³¹ Conciliatory Proposal, 27 February 1775, *American Archives*.

authority to approve or disapprove legislation but was promising the colonies the net revenue from duties. Yet, the resolution created political backlash which paralyzed North given the fragility of the office of the Prime Minister. Not two months later and against the Prime Minister's personal wishes does the susceptibility of his position become obvious when politics reigned superior and Lord North approved Great Britain's declaration of war on the North American subjects.

The Secretaries: The Earl of Hillsborough, a Confident Hawk

The Earl of Hillsborough stormed into the Prime Minister's office, bringing with him a multi-age proposal. The subject line boasted information pertaining to the North American colonies. The Duke of Grafton, Prime Minister before Lord North, did not intimidate the first Secretary of State for the Colonies. Hillsborough's confidence and determination, characteristics which influenced his entire tenure as Secretary of State, overshadowed any semblance of trepidation he may have harbored in his body.³² Based on these characteristics of the Secretary, it is easy to imagine the scene which may have unfolded in the Prime Minister's office. Lord Hillsborough may have presented his proposal then starred the Duke in the eyes with a hawk-like ferocity which defied the normal decorum observed between cabinet members and their Prime Minister. By 1769, however, Hillsborough witnessed enough. The disruptive actions of the North American colonists, especially those committed by the Bostonians, could no longer be tolerated. Hillsborough thought the empire needed to be concerned with other more pressing matters such as the debate over westward expansion into the Ohio region. To the Secretary, colonial disarray was nothing more a distraction obfuscating the King's ability to strengthen his empire.

³² Charles R. Ritcheson, *British Politics and the American Revolution* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), 115-116.

Hillsborough already ordered Gage to send two regiments to Boston to support the civil government and approved the usage of force, if necessary.³³ He must have wondered what else he could do to subjugate the North American colonies to the Crown swiftly and permanently. *Perhaps*, he could have contemplated as he turned to leave the office, *this proposal will be enough*. While uncertain about the effectiveness of his recommendation, Hillsborough was certain about one thing – no matter what, the actions of the colonists were unacceptable and they needed to be shown this. Given his known determination, he would not give up until this vision for North America was met.

Testing his limits in the newly created cabinet position, Hillsborough's proposal for America provided recommendations giving the Crown more influencing in selecting political appointees, punitive ways to control unruly colonies, and a suggestion to quarter the troops in both public and private houses. Both the Prime Minister and King George III thought Hillsborough's proposal too aggressive in 1769.³⁴ The two men lost faith in their newly appointed Secretary.

Lord Hillsborough acted entirely within his rights as the Colonial Secretary by submitting a proposal to the Prime Minister. Prior to the creation of this cabinet position in 1768, only two Offices of the Secretary of State existed, one for the Northern Department and one for the Southern Department, to whom colonial matters used to be addressed. After the riots in Boston in the early 1760s, Parliament thought it prudent to establish an entire office dedicated to the administration of colonial affairs. Prior to the inception of the American Department, officials did not receive instructions from a single department; rather, mother country-colony communication was dispersed. "The result of this multiple supervision was that no one

³³ Hillsborough to Bernard, 30 July 1768, CO 5/765.

³⁴ Ritcheson, 124-125.

department in the government had collected all the information necessary to conduct the affairs of a large empire.”³⁵ Said otherwise, information was extremely centralized and widely dispersed in the 18th century cabinet. Each man may have held a part of the puzzle but no man held the finalized image. All, then, envisioned an incomplete picture of the magnitude and ramifications of the events throughout the empire. The creation of a third Secretary of State sought to mitigate this confusion. Two undersecretaries worked for the Secretary of State to facilitate the communication and information gathering. These undersecretaries normally held similar political views to their Secretary. For the Hillsborough years, this meant a conservative triumvirate in the American Department focused on the status of Great Britain among other European powers.³⁶

Generally, the secretary and his undersecretaries played an active role in colonial affairs in the prelude to the American War of Independence. They oft formulated “vaguely planned or only dimly considered” ideas from whatever ministry they served into acts of Parliament or colonial orders.³⁷ The ability to shape policy, for better or for worse, is significant on two levels when considering the role of the Colonial Secretary in contributing to the coming of the War. First, it placed extensive power into the hands of the American Department administration. Second, verification of the quality of work may not have complimented increased agency. The “vaguely planned” and “dimly considered” policies meant not only haphazard planning but also haphazard enforcement. In addition to policy making, the Secretaries of State also: ordered troop movements, received reports, supervise correspondence, and prepare agendas.³⁸ They immediately supervised the Commander in Chief of the British Forces in North

³⁵ B.D. Bargar, *Lord Dartmouth and the American Revolution* (Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 1965), 62.

³⁶ John Shy, *Towards Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), 406.

³⁷ Wickwire, 86-87.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 17-18, 55.

America and were in constant communication with both him and the King. Given their wide oversight of the colonies, to include the military, an inability to deliberately craft policy would have left much room for error in colonial governance and strategy formulation.

For the Secretaries of State, relationships mattered as their power depended “on cordiality between superior and subordinate.”³⁹ This principle held whether the relationship in question was that between Prime Minister and Secretary or Secretary and undersecretaries. If trust was not created, then the superior would likely not listen to his subordinate. Hillsborough laid the groundwork and set the precedent of explicit and implied jobs for future Secretaries of State for the American Colonies. His firm, unapologetic policies made him a novel voice during a period categorized by caution among the British Decision Makers. Had Hillsborough been the Secretary of State in 1774, his recommendations would have likely been heeded. Nevertheless, the Secretary’s ambition and firm stance on America eventually led to his dismissal from office in 1772. In his place emerged the conciliatory Lord Dartmouth.

The Secretaries: The Earl of Dartmouth, a Confident Dove

Five months after assuming his position as the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Dartmouth paused to pen his thoughts on the relationship between a government and its subjects. October of 1772 proved itself to be a slow month for the American Department which allowed for this unusual moment of contemplation. Dartmouth did not intend to keep his reflections private, however. Rather, his very personal musings traversed the Atlantic Ocean and landed in the hands of General Thomas Gage. “Sir,” he began, “In every society there must be somewhere a supreme uncontrollable power, an absolute authority to decide and determine...Legal subjugation to legal Government is essential to legal freedom.” With these words, Dartmouth

³⁹ Ibid, 72.

advocated for colonial adherence to English government. Dartmouth continued, “The welfare and happiness of all depend upon the punctual and regular discharge of the Duties of each...” *The colonies must listen to the Administration, just as the Administration must listen to the colonies*, Dartmouth likely thought. Finishing his letter to Gage, the Secretary urged that prosperity and happiness could ultimately, “Only arise from a strict and exact observance (on both sides) of that line and law and justice which divided as the authority of the ruling Power on the one hand from the Rights of those who are obedience to it, on the other.”⁴⁰

Though a note rooted in personal beliefs, Dartmouth wrote to his North American Commander in Chief for a reason. Until this point, Gage had only received word of his mission in North America – support the civil authorities and maintain the public peace – but not *why* he was to do it. This letter clarified the purpose of the colonial mission. To Dartmouth, the maintaining Parliamentary supremacy was the desired outcome of occupation in North America; not conflict, violence, or bloodshed. He desired to mend relations between the mother country and her subjects by using constitutional principles.⁴¹ As would become evident, however, Lord Dartmouth spoke a different language than the Americans and his colleagues in London. In 1774, just before Gage assumed his titles of Commander in Chief and Colonial Governor, the Secretary cautioned the Commander “to use every endeavour to...quiet the minds of the people...and by mild and gentle persuasion to induce...submission.”⁴² Colonial sympathizer, more than any Secretary of State in the past, characterized the Earl of Dartmouth’s tenure.⁴³

⁴⁰ Dartmouth to Gage, 9 December 1772, CO 5/765.

⁴¹ Bargar, iii.

⁴² Pearson, 29.

⁴³ John Shy, “Weak Link of the Empire,” George Athan Billias, ed., *George Washington's Generals and Opponents: Their Exploits and Leadership* (Boston: Da Capo Press, 1994), 13.

Lord Dartmouth was no stranger to political life before serving as the Colonial Secretary. In all his offices, Dartmouth took an economic and diplomatic approach to exerting control over the rebellious colonists.⁴⁴ Dartmouth served as the President of the Board of Trade under the Rockingham Government. While President, he oversaw the repeal of the Stamp Act; an act he supported out of economic considerations.⁴⁵ As Colonial Secretary, whether formulating policy regarding westward expansion into the Ohio region or responding to colonial insurrection, Dartmouth supported measures that would subjugate the colonists to the Crown but would not lead to violence.⁴⁶

Compared to his predecessor the Earl of Hillsborough, Secretary Dartmouth appeared weak and too conscious of colonial sentiment to the rest of the British leadership. Even colonial subjects questioned Dartmouth's abilities. Ben Franklin wrote of Dartmouth in 1773 that he "is truly a good man, and wishes sincerely a good understanding with the colonies, but does not seem to have the strength equal to his wishes..."⁴⁷ This weaknesses about which Franklin wrote manifested in more non-militant policies proposed by Dartmouth. Perhaps Dartmouth's pious nature as a strict Methodist or his passion for philanthropy also contributed to his even-tempered disposition toward the North American colonists.⁴⁸ Regardless of the reasoning, Parliament and the King lost hope in his abilities as the situation in North America turned bleak towards the end of 1774. Dartmouth's conciliatory measures constantly failed as he ultimately was the one to order General Thomas Gage to march on Concord in April of 1775.

⁴⁴ Pearson, 25.

⁴⁵ Shy, "Weak Link," 404.

⁴⁶ Bargar, 93-94.

⁴⁷ Franklin to his Son. 14 July 1773. *Franklin's Works, II*. Bigelow, ed., 154.

⁴⁸ Bargar, 9-10.

The General: Thomas Gage, an Uncertain Dove

After a long year away from North America, General Thomas Gage disembarked the HMS Livey and strode onto the familiar docks of Boston Harbor. The taste of the salty Atlantic Ocean and smells of the bustling fish market overwhelmed Gage's senses. When he left the colonies in 1773, Gage bore the sole title as Commander in Chief of the British Forces in North America. Now, in 1774, General Gage was also Governor Gage, assuming the dual roles of Commander in Chief and Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.⁴⁹

Included in Gage's order were specific instructions to ensure the execution of and "due Obedience thereto" the Coercive Acts, most notably, the Boston Port Act.⁵⁰ Parliament passed this Act in response to the destruction of the East India Tea in the Boston Harbor on 16 December 1773. It was intended to economically pressure the colonists to the supremacy of the law. However, of the collection of legislative which comprised the Coercive Acts, the Boston Port Act inspired the most controversy among the Americans. The bill closed the Port of Boston until Massachusetts Bay could pay reparations to the treasury and the East India Company. Once effective on 1 June 1774, economics soon became paramount to the conflict in New England.⁵¹ The new governor, as well as the rest of the administration, initially supported the passage of the Coercive Acts to prevent war. General Gage must have thought he possessed at least a basic understanding of the situation into which he would enter upon arrival in North America. He likely assumed colonial insurrection could be easily assuaged.

⁴⁹ Hillsborough wrote to Gage on 9 April 1774 that Gage was to "return immediately" to North America and sent him "by His Majesty's Command a Commission under the Great Seal, appointing you Captain General and Governor in Chief of His Majesty's Province of Massachusetts Bay." *The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage*, Vol. 2. Clarence Carter, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933), 158-159.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ See Chapter III: The Market, for more.

In accordance with his assumption, some Bostonians welcomed Gage into their city on that May morning. He could hear their acclamations all around as he assumed the governorship. One colonist admiringly recounted that the new governor “express’d himself as a servant of the Crown,” and confessed that, as such, “he was obliged to see the [Port] Act put in execution...but [Gage] would do all in his power to serve us...” the Bostonian sighed in relief.⁵² However, this relief did not last long as Gage began to govern in his new position.

Even amid the support and excitement, Gage understood the fragility of the situation in which he found himself. In Great Britain, opinions of the colonists were shifting from understanding to impatient. Meanwhile, conflict plagued the remainder of the British Empire which took valuable resources from the force in North America. The General returned to Boston ready to rule once again with an iron fist and determined to quickly end colonial subversion, just as he did before his reprieve to England. In October of 1774, he relayed to Lord Dartmouth, “I don’t see what else can be done. If force is to be used at length, it must be a considerable one...for to begin with small will encourage resistance and not terrify; and will in the end cost more blood and Treasure.”⁵³ Seemingly aggressive, this statement actually conveyed Gage’s reluctance to use military Force. He feared a lack of deliberate planning in London about how and when the military would be used. Moreover, his letter disclosed his general uncertainty about how to handle the events unfolding in Boston – a flaw which would eventually be his demise. The impermanence of his tyrannical leadership style soon exposed itself. By 1775, Gage found himself without a voice in the decision-making process, responding to higher orders to suppress colonial insurrection solely out of a sense of obligatory duty.

⁵² Shy, “Weak Link,” 23.

⁵³ Gage to Dartmouth, 30 October 1774, CO 5/92.

Gage, facing the difficult task of serving as both military commander and civilian governor, must have wrestled internally with his dual roles, his confidence wavering. Portrayals of the General elucidate his marginal self-assuredness. Some described Gage as having a “tall military figure” with “a round face featured by a small weak mouth.” Most everybody liked him, as evidenced by the warm welcome Gage received in Boston. General Gage was “a professional soldier” who expected the same professionalism from his men. Critics claimed that Gage “lacked the subtlety and the strength and the sense of fast maneuver that the situation [in America] would soon demand. Worse, in crises he vacillated, and Boston [in 1774] needed firm and careful control.”⁵⁴ Caution and military timidity characterized Gage’s command in the prelude to the American War of Independence.⁵⁵ Ultimately, Gage could be summarized as “the perfect peacetime general” with “no talent at all for making war.”⁵⁶ These characterizations are essential for understanding the General’s role in British failure to establish an effective North American strategy. While he may have been an effective commander before 1774, once preparations for war began to be made in this year, General Gage retreated from the idea of the effectiveness of prolonged armed conflict in North America.

Of anyone in power at this time, Gage should have been the most confident in his military abilities. From a noble family of little notoriety, officership emerged as young Thomas’ only way to establish a reputation for himself independent of his family’s mediocre status. Thus, when Gage turned of age, he purchased a commission and began what would become an illustrious career of military service. He first served as an aide de camp in the War of Austrian

⁵⁴ Pearson, 35.

⁵⁵ John Kenneth Rowland, "General Thomas Gage, the Eighteenth-Century Literature of Military Intelligence, and the Transition from Peace to Revolutionary War, 1774 to 1775," *Historical Reflections*, Vol. 32, No. 3. *Crossing the Border – Expanding the Enlightenment* (New York: Berghann Books, 2006), 507.

⁵⁶ Shy, *Towards Lexington*, 424.

Succession, then lead General Braddock's advanced guard unit in the French and Indian War, and later raised and commanded the 80th light infantry regiment in North America. He then became the wartime governor of Montreal before being promoted to Commander in Chief in North America in 1763.⁵⁷ Well-read in books and treatises on the art of war, military histories, and biographies, Gage understood warfare in a variety of contexts.⁵⁸ Yet, shyness plagued the man who the Crown needed to be assertive.

As the Commander in Chief of the British Forces in North America, General Gage held the highest-ranking office in the region. He received his orders directly from the Colonial Secretary. Aside from budgetary approval, the British military operated independently of Parliament. In accordance with his commission as a British Officer, Gage was legally obligated to follow his superior's orders – regardless of his own opinion.⁵⁹ However, as military historian Ira Gruber explains about the Seven Years' War, “commanders often had the opportunity as well as the political influence and independence of mind to modify strategy to suit themselves.”⁶⁰ Gage, an officer serving in the North American area of operations during this war, would have understood this ability to operate within his commander's intent. Thus, though law ordered Gage to obey his superior and mission, he also maintained some freedom of thought in which to exercise his own command in North America leading to the American War of Independence.

From his first arrival in North America in the 1760s, confusion around Gage's mission emerged. From 1765 when Parliament repealed the Stamp Act before the military could suppress the riots, Britons, including Gage, recognized a shifting military mission in America.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Shy, “Weak Link,” 4; Rowland, 508.

⁵⁸ Rowland, 510-511.

⁵⁹ Shy, *Towards Lexington*, 343-345.

⁶⁰ Gruber, 44.

⁶¹ Shy, “Weak Link,” 13.

In the face of an uncertain mission, Gage remained certain that he should avoid any actions that might initiate bloody conflict between his troops and the American colonists.⁶² This is evidenced by his firm belief that military presence would not cause “inconveniences” or “interrupt a quiet and peaceable Election, or render it more free and uninterrupted...” as he “confess[ed]” to Governor Bernard in 1769. The General’s confidence stemmed from his perception that “No inconvenience has ever been found from the King’s Troops being in other Places in His Majesty’s Dominions on Similar Occasions.” Upholding his mission to stabilize Boston, aid the civil magistrates, and ensure the execution of the laws, he concluded his letter to the governor stating, “I flatter myself [no inconveniences] will be found in Boston” from the presence of British forces.⁶³

A year after his arrival, General Gage maintained a vision and certain understanding of why his men occupied the Massachusetts Bay town. They did not remain to cause “inconveniences” or inspire violent reactions; rather, the Regulars were to be a stabilizing force. However, his vision did not necessarily match that of the Decision Makers in London as the years progressed. How Gage and his forces were to execute the original mission of 1768 progressively obscured as upheaval in the colonies continued. The Commander in Chief’s enumerated responsibilities and his ability to do them only grew hazier when he also gained the title of Colonial Governor.

As an officer, Gage could not use troops against civilian disorder; but as Governor, could request the ability to do so from his cabinet.⁶⁴ In a letter from Lord Halifax to Gage in 1765, Halifax clarified that, for the North American colonies

⁶² Reginald Hargreaves, *The Bloodybacks: The British Serviceman in North America and the Caribbean 1655-1783* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1968), 212.

⁶³ Gage to Bernard, 22 May 1769, CO 5/87.

⁶⁴ Shy, “Weak Link,” 22.

The orders of the Commander in Chief *and* of departmental brigadiers were to be supreme in military matters. If the brigadier were out of the province, however, a governor with the consent of his council might give directions to regular troops when 'for the benefit of his Government,' though in no case was a governor to interfere with regimental administration.⁶⁵

The role of the governor and of the officer in charge, then, overlapped. This convention remained for the ensuing decades. Essentially, Gage simply consolidated powers which already defaulted to his control as the Commander in Chief.

Thomas Gage's changing opinions on how to handle the budding conflict in America from 1768 to 1775 reflect his uncertainty in his persona and confusion over his delegated powers. In the late 1760s, Gage actively agreed that the British government needed to take a firm stance on American disorder. He advocated for keeping the regulars on the Eastern seaboard in Boston and the surrounding cities in case future insurrections needed to be suppressed. When ordered to send troops to Boston in 1768 at the request of Governor Bernard, Gage wrote to Viscount Barrington, the Secretary at War, "I know of nothing that can so effectually quell the Spirit of Sedition...as Speedy, vigorous, and unanimous Measures taken in England to suppress it."⁶⁶ After Bostonians disposed of the imported tea in 1773, Gage declared to King George that the Americans "will be lyons, whilst we are lambs; but if we take the resolute part, they will undoubtedly prove very meek."⁶⁷ Much like the Monarch in 1775, the General championed force throughout 1773 and thought military suppression the only option.

Yet, in mid-1774 as Parliament and the Crown became more resolute in their coercive policies towards North America, Gage became more irresolute in his recommended courses of actions. Rather than encouraging England's new punitive spirit, Gage began to voice reservations

⁶⁵ Ellis to Halifax, 7 February 1765, WO 4/987; Halifax to Gage, 9 February 1765, *Gage Corr.*, II, 23.

⁶⁶ Shy, "Weak Link," 16-18.

⁶⁷ O'Shaughnessy, 23. Note that this quotation is oft cited in various sources as an example of Gage's support for decisive military action before 1774.

about using force in America. He even advocated for the suspension of the Coercive Acts until Britain would be actually effective in crushing the rebellion.⁶⁸ Writing privately to Secretary Dartmouth, the Commander expressed that he saw the Crown having only two options: Britain either needed to use considerable force, military power they did not have, to stop colonial rebellion or release all authority over North America.⁶⁹ To those in England, this advice came across as an excuse. Gage appeared to be losing control of his army throughout 1774. Now, British leaders, both military and civilian, “thought Gage’s inaction and conciliatory behavior inexcusable, and they howled for his head.”⁷⁰ From 1774 until his termination in 1775, Gage lost the trust and support of not just King George but of nearly everyone in Great Britain. Gage appeared too pusillanimous, incompetent, weak, and ineffective. Whether in support of colonial suppression or against it, his opinions no longer mattered to the rest of the Ministry.

When the British regulars first arrived on Boston’s shores in 1768, Gage as the Commander in Chief of the British Forces in North America held the power to shape Anglo-American relations for the decade to come. As historian John Shy explains, “[Gage] could not have prevented the American Revolution, but he could, and did, give its beginning a particular shape.”⁷¹ This statement yields dual importance. Generally, it explains why the Colonial Secretary relied so heavily on the observations from the Commander in Chief during the first years of the occupation of Boston. The administration assumed an initial show of force would deter colonial insurrection; therefore, the military’s presence, not necessarily military actions, became the Crown’s primary hope. More specifically, here Shy alludes to General Gage’s role in designing a pre-war military strategy for North America. Had the General been resolute in his

⁶⁸ Ritcheson, 170; O’Shaughnessy, 23.

⁶⁹ Gage to Dartmouth, 30 October 1774, CO 5/92.

⁷⁰ Shy, *Towards Lexington*, 417.

⁷¹ Shy, “Weak Link,” 3.

stance on how to militarily engage with the Americans and clear and consistent on the appropriate level of escalation of force to be used, then perhaps the Decision Makers back in England could have made cohesive strategies, themselves.

However, by 1774, Gage's uncertainty and hesitancy demonstrated when serving as both Commander in Chief and Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony essentially lost him all the power he once held in influencing the Crown's course of action. Before this year, the Decision Makers took his advice and advocacy for swift action into consideration. However, as 1774 progressed and the Crown dispatched more generals to New England, England's distrust of Gage's abilities became ever clearer. By 1775 General Thomas Gage faced the age-old ethical dilemma of responding to orders in the absence of the ability to think critically about the situation facing he and his men. Though he served as Britain's eyes and ears in North America, on the eve of conflict, the final decision to militarily engage the colonists was not that of the General's doing.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The responsibility for the war in North America did not reside with one man. Rather, the combined leadership – or lack thereof – of the King, the Prime Minister, the Colonial Secretaries, and the Commander in Chief of the British Forces in North America created the perfect clash of perspectives, beliefs, and responsibilities to promote inaction when it came to Boston. The increased aggressiveness and impatience of King George III and Parliament, the political vulnerability and acquiescence of Lord North and Lord Dartmouth, the military weakness and personal uncertainty of General Gage, all culminated in Dartmouth's signing of the letter approving Gage to send the British forces to march on Concord in April of 1775.

Moreover, just as one person did not singlehandedly decide to instigate war, conflict did not originate solely in response to the events which occurred in Boston between 1768 to 1775 – especially not in an empire as large as Britain's in the eighteenth century. Rather, multiple events both internal and external to the mother country demanded the attention of each of these men. From security threats posed by France and Spain to the British Empire to economic crises within England, the personal biases of the political and military Decision Makers influenced their reactions to these events and prevented the creation of a cohesive North American strategy at the onset of upheaval in the mid-1760s – a preemptive action which may have delayed the detrimental blow that the American War of Independence would be to the British Empire.

Chapter II: The Neighbors

*“War is the continuation of politics by other means.”*⁷²

The global balance of power tilted in Great Britain's favor after the Seven Years' War. Fought between 1754 and 1763, this global conflict was known as the Seven Years' War in Europe and the French and Indian War in North America. Considered the first world war by many, the Seven Years' War set the geopolitical stage in the pre-War of American Independence era. Out of the war emerged new alliances, new enemies, and new complexities for the British Empire. Though the Seven Years' War bolstered British power, the new world order still raised much concern for the Crown, his ministers, and the military.

The Seven Years' War left France and Spain – Great Britain's continental neighbors – devising ways to reverse England's post-war victories. Historian Daniel Baugh explains the French approach to foreign policy in the interwar years. He asserts that “after losing countless colonies to British arms in the Seven Years' War, French policy was primarily directed towards avenging those losses and securing the retention of what remained in French hands.”⁷³ Like France, Spain too assumed an agitated and aggressive posturing throughout the world. This further signaled to British political and military Decision Makers that the late 1760s and early 1770s would not be the era of peace for which they longed; rather, it would be one of geopolitical strife as France and Spain yielded the ability to regain strength in the regions in which King George III maintained vested strategic interest. Arguably, if the Crown had retained its territorial gains from the Seven Years' War, thus keeping France and Spain out of, most notably, North America and vital islands which sat dangerously close to British territory, then “the fleets of France and Spain would have been permanently at [England's] mercy” as England

⁷² Carl von Clausewitz, “On War.”

⁷³ Daniel Baugh, “Withdrawing from Europe: Anglo-French Maritime Geopolitics, 1750-1800,” *The International History Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1. Pp. 1-32 (Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1998), 6.

would have controlled key global holdings.⁷⁴ However, British supremacy was soon challenged after the first global conflict.

Baugh explains the intricacy of the composition of the balance of power in the eighteenth century. He writes that:

The balance of power thus conceived was a balance of land power; it took cognizance of the size, population, and productive capacity of territories...At a military level, calculations were made about the size and military readiness of the standing army, the manpower available for recruitment, and the strategic attributes of a state's location and terrain...Although defense was the usual goal, states possessing efficient armies in readiness did not mind menacing their neighbours.⁷⁵

“Menacing their neighbours” is exactly what the French and Spanish did with Great Britain while the British pursued territorial defense of their pre-existing and growing empire. Aside from engaging with France and Spain, Great Britain also felt military, diplomatic, and economic pressure from Russia, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands, Prussia, Austria, India, and Canada. For the purposes of understanding the demands on the British military and Decision Makers, this chapter tells the story primarily of the threats on the British Empire created by the Spanish and the French. The activity of these nations spanned not only the European continent but also the subcontinent of South Asia and the frontier in North America.

The perception of the strength of Great Britain by other states and, conversely, Britain's perception of other states' strength mattered as this manifestation, whether real or perceived, affected overall British grand strategy and policies. Strategic assessment forced the Decision Makers to allocate time, energy, and resources. Yet, each Decision Maker maintained his own conflict of interest. The King largely cared about Great Britain's reputation among European superpowers. Economic considerations and the governance of India occupied the Prime

⁷⁴ Winston Churchill, *A History of the English Speaking Peoples: The Age of Revolution* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1957), 162.

⁷⁵ Baugh, 7.

Minister's attention. The Secretaries of State raised concern without focus. Even the Commander in Chief found himself occupied with the frontier and the encroachment of European states in North America, rather than Bostonian insurrection. While each man was right to focus on his enumerated area of expertise, doing this when coupled with no emphases on creating a collective shared understanding about the various geopolitical demands on the British Empire further hindered the establishment of a cohesive strategy in New England. Ultimately, the decision from 1768 to 1774 seemed to be one of defending other colonial holdings over attempting to stabilize Boston. Diplomacy suffered in the era leading up to the American War of Independence and, in its place, emerged multiple conflicts at varying levels of escalation, all with the potential of erupting into war. Spanish and French security threats to the British mainland, her allies, and her colonies obscured the focus of Great Britain's military and political Decision Makers as the activity of these other global powers implicated political, economic, and military ramifications that could not be ignored if the Crown wished to retain his empire.

Periods of British Foreign Policy

British foreign policy experienced three distinct periods between 1768 and 1775 which can be generally summarized as interventionist, nonexistent, and isolationist. Foreign policy, broadly defined, involved nearly all facets of the royal and political administrations. Policy most notably drew on the expertise and guidance of the King, the Prime Minister, the Board of Trade, the three Secretaries of State, and the Commanders in Chief of the regions of interest. It was because of the structural competing interests of these positions, strong personalities of the people who held the positions, and administrative changes that foreign policy witnessed multiple shifts prior to the American War of Independence. From 1768 to 1770, under the administration of the Earl of Hillsborough and prior to Lord North's tenure as Prime Minister, King George emphasized an

externally focused foreign policy. The European continent experienced prolonged activity which consumed British attention – over that of the American colonies. In short, the aim during these two years was to end British isolationism on the European continent, especially in the eastern area of operations.⁷⁶

Then, in 1770, domestic parliamentary issues, upheaval, and the resignation of Lord Grafton and confirmation of Lord North as Prime Minister paused foreign policy to allow England to overcome its domestic political turmoil. King George even resigned his attention to solve parliamentary discord and urged members “...to avoid all Heats and Animosities amongst yourselves, and to cultivate that Spirit of Harmony which becomes those who have but One common Object in their View...” with the hope that his plea would reorient his administration to engaging with the other European super powers, namely France and Spain.⁷⁷ The King’s speech proved fruitless as economic crisis struck Great Britain and the King’s empire in the early 1770s. Though conflict still raged throughout the globe, an internal focus characterized the second era of British foreign policy from 1771 to 1773.

Finally, a policy of “splendid isolation” emerged between 1773 and 1775 as administration focus shifted to North America. This period began with an emphasis placed not on alliances but instead on increasing English naval power.⁷⁸ The increased activity in North America, finally beginning to be perceived as actually threatening to the Crown and England’s reputation by 1774, contributed to the final shift in foreign policy. As historian H.M. Scott explains in his book on British foreign policy, colonial success was deemed “essential for future

⁷⁶ H.M. Scott, *British foreign policy in the age of the American Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 127.

⁷⁷ “Lords Journals,” 09 January 1770, Vol. 32, 8 GEO. III-10 GEO III, HL/PO/JO/2/32 (London: Parliamentary Archives), 393-394.

⁷⁸ Scott, 6, 163, 193.

credibility in foreign policy.”⁷⁹ This is so because of both the weak image and inability to govern colonies cast to the other world powers as well as the economic costs of managing, or mismanaging colonies. King George himself even argued that “we must get the colonies in order before we engage with our neighbors.”⁸⁰ Even though three distinct periods of foreign policy emerged in the years leading to Anglo-colonial conflict, the approaches to foreign policy and the aims of each period were not agreed upon by everyone in the British government. Each Decision Maker held his own agenda that oft removed his attention from the New England colonies – a complexity which only added to the confusion over the North American military strategy.

The Decision Makers and Geopolitics

The expansive reach of the territory and interests of the British Empire, spanning from the continents of Europe and South Asia to the islands of the Caribbean and the sought after explored and yet to be explored regions of North America, meant that the Monarch constantly assessed the strength of his geographic, political, and economic borders. From 1768 until 1774, the priority, in King George's mind, lay in maintaining the general tranquility and peace of other European powers towards Great Britain. In his addresses to parliament, he frequently advocated for a European-centric foreign policy and envisioned Britain playing an active role in European politics to deter the threat to her security and prosperity posed by France.⁸¹

In an opening speech to a joint session of the House of Lords and House of Commons in November of 1768, King George III professed his European concerns. He opened his address reaffirming his general commitment to peace. George relayed, “It would have given Me great

⁷⁹ Scott, 194.

⁸⁰ Scott, 195. From the *Correspondence of George III*, ii., 372.

⁸¹ In all of King George's opening addresses to Parliament after 1768 and until 1774, the King infrequently mentioned the events occurring in New England, let alone Boston. This includes no or limited mention of the 'Boston Massacre' and the 'Boston Tea Party.' Instead, King George frequently mentioned other global events, domestic conflicts, the effects of both on Parliament, and Great Britain's relationship with the European continent.

Satisfaction to have been able to acquaint you, that all the other Powers of Europe had been as careful as I have ever been to avoid taking any Step that might endanger the general Tranquility...” thus implying that the King’s actions all encouraged peace, contrary to the actions of his fellow monarchs. George continued, updating Parliament on notices from the regal administrations he just admonished. “I Have constantly received, and do still receive from them, the strongest Assurances of their pacifick Dispositions towards this Country.” George surmised that his kingdom seemed to be positioned for peace. Yet he made it known to Parliament that he remained resolute that “No Assurances, however, shall divert my constant Resolution stedfastly to attend the general Interest of Europe, nor shall and Consideration prevail upon me to suffer any attempt that may be made derogatory to the Honour and Dignity of My Crown, or injurious to the Rights of My People.”⁸² The King recognized that he needed to maintain a global perspective to protect his subjects, as a result of the explicit and implicit responsibilities of his position.

In 1772, King George reaffirmed this commitment in front of Parliament, again proclaiming that “I continue to receive from Foreign Powers the strongest Assurances of the Pacifick Dispositions towards this country; and it shall be my constant Endeavour to preserve the general Tranquillity, as far as is consistent with the Honour of My Crown and the Interests of My People.”⁸³ The monarch, therefore, remained committed to peace within and around his borders. Yet, peace would be difficult to achieve when discontent plagued a portion of the British Empire and no cohesive plan existed. As the hierarchical leader of the Decision Makers, the King’s inability to focus attention on one group or region – like North America, for example – meant

⁸² “Lords Journals,” 08 November 1768, Vol. 32, 8 GEO. III-10 GEO III, HL/PO/JO/2/32 (London: Parliamentary Archives), 164-165.

⁸³ “Lords Journals,” 26 NOV 1772, Vol. 33, 11 GEO. III-14 GEO III, HL/PO/JO/2/33 (London: Parliamentary Archives), 464-465.

that strategic cohesiveness would have been nearly impossible given the concurrent activity of the French, Spanish, and other European states.

Yet, the King of England was not the only Decision Maker whose attention would have been diverted by global activity throughout the empire. Geopolitical events competed with the insurrection in New England for the focus of Lord North, Secretaries Hillsborough and Dartmouth, and General Gage. The Prime Minister was a politically vulnerable position, contingent on balancing the support of the King and the government. He oversaw the activity of the secretaries, to include the Secretaries of State and the Board of Trade, Parliament, and acted as a personal advisor to the monarch.⁸⁴ Legislation for domestic and empire governance occupied much of his attention, especially Lord North's.⁸⁵ Thus, just like George III, North also needed to be globally minded to effectively provide domestic and global oversight.

Though constitutionally responsible for North America, the Secretaries of State for the Colonies were similarly not isolated from the effects of European security threats, especially those which occurred on the North American continent between the French, Spanish, and Native Americans. The Earl of Hillsborough, the first Secretary of State for the Colonies, faced an additional challenge of having to define his role and assert the authority of this new secretaryship amid the powers of the Northern and Southern Secretaries of State. At times, the Secretaries of State found themselves in conflict with each other over the spheres of influence in conflict resolution. Personal desires for power could have overshadowed the larger picture, further preventing the creation of cohesive personal and administrative strategies for North America.

⁸⁴ Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 57

⁸⁵ For an expanded explanation of the role of the Prime Minister in the 18th century, see "The Prime Minister: Lord North, a Susceptible Dove" in Chapter I: The Decision Makers.

Finally, General Thomas Gage's resources, authority, and plans would have been influenced by global military engagements. Technically removed from the decisions made regarding diplomacy and force outside of North America, as the regional Commander in Chief operating a fraction of His Majesty's forces within a limited budget, the geopolitical decisions made in London yielded ramifications for the status of General Gage's force. Ultimately, Spanish and French security threats to the British mainland, her allies, and her colonies contributed to preventing the formation of a North American strategy.

Spain: A Maritime Threat

Of the multiple geopolitical concerns held by the English on the eve of the American War of Independence, Spanish and French global activity, as well as the potential for a powerful Franco-Spanish alliance, appeared the most concerning to British strategic thinkers. These European powers forced England to prepare to fight multiple front wars in Europe, South Asia, the Caribbean, and North America. Yet, before assessing the threats in North America, this section first engages the conflicts raging throughout the globe external to the contested continent.

Spain, the lesser threat of the two countries but still a major concern, threatened British territory in the southeast of North America and professed the ability to wage naval wars with England over island territories. Anglo-Spanish relations are described as "surprisingly good" in the mid-1770s. However, as historian Daniel Baugh explains, "Spain had the strongest reasons of all the powers for worrying about the growing maritime sway of Britain: Spain's possessions in America supplied both hard money and strategic basis; and, above all, Spain had been steadily building up its navy."⁸⁶ Thus, the "good" relationship between Spain and Great Britain was still tenuous in the minds of both parties and yielded the potential to escalate. Meanwhile, when

⁸⁶ Baugh, 19.

considered Franco-Spanish relations, Baugh explains that the Spanish began working to build a relationship with the French starting around 1758. This is notable for two reasons. The first is that beginning of this relationship was considered a major pivot in French foreign policy.⁸⁷ Second, this meant that by the time the English executed the first period of foreign policy in the pre-war era, that characterized by an external focus, the Spanish and French already built a ten-year-long alliance. It would have been diplomatically difficult for Great Britain to assert herself within this dynamic, especially as conflict arose at the dawn of a new decade.

Between the Carib War and the Falklands Crisis, the early 1770s experienced Anglo-Spanish military confrontation. The Carib War, fought from 1769 to November of 1773 between the Caribs of St. Vincent and Great Britain, risked potential action by Spanish authorities against British subjects in the North American colonies.⁸⁸ The Secretary of War wrote to Secretary Hillsborough in 1772 that, "The King having thought fit upon the representations that have been made to His Majesty of the danger to which the Island of St. Vincent is exposed from the hostile and rebellious disposition of the Charribs, to signify His Commands that a military Force should be employed to reduce them to submission."⁸⁹ Thus, the Carib War gained the attention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies diverting his attention to the small island nation. Aside from these orders, this conflict does not seem to frequently appear mentioned in any of the correspondences between the Secretaries of State, Prime Minister, Commander in Chief, or the King. However, it is still important to mention as a potential threat to the strength and security of the British Empire that would have, at the very least, loomed in the back of the minds of the political and military Decision Makers.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 19.

⁸⁸ Scott, 169.

⁸⁹ Barrington to Hillsborough, 16 April 1772, CO 5/167.

The Falklands Crisis, conversely, occupied the attention of not only King George III and Lord North but also the Earl of Hillsborough – a person whose attention should have been on monitoring the North American colonies. It raised concerns over the perception of English strength and growing Franco-Spanish alliance. For one year, from 1770 to 1771, the Falkland Islands unnerved Great Britain, France, and Spain. As Lord Hillsborough explained to General Gage in a “Most Secret and Confidential” letter regarding Spanish activity in the Falklands, “so violent a proceeding in a time of profound Peace will...be considered as an open Act of Hostility.” Gage, therefore, was to prepare a “considerable Naval Armament,” by the orders of the King, should war follow.⁹⁰ Thus, the King, his Colonial Secretary, and the Commander in Chief all grew progressively consumed with the impending Anglo-Spanish conflict over the British claimed a garrison, known as Port Egmont, on these Spanish-controlled islands located off the coast of South America. Seemingly insignificant in the global context, Spain resented what was perceived as British occupation and wanted to oust Great Britain from the territory.⁹¹

Drawing on their preexisting relationship, the Spanish sought to involve France in this effort. To the British, it appeared the House of Bourbon would be ready to aid Spain in their attempted conquest. Nervous and determined to appear strong and maintain her regional presence, England quickly escalated force against Spain. Historian Brendan Simms clearly explains the Crown's strategic interest. He writes that “What was at stake here was nothing less than the question of hemispheric dominance: the Falklands were a staging post for a British drive into the Pacific Ocean around Cape Horn...The British...were determined not to allow another slap in the face on Corsican lines...”⁹² For King George and, more broadly the House of

⁹⁰ Hillsborough to Gage, 28 September 1770, *Correspondence of General Thomas Gage*, 113.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 141.

⁹² Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire, 1714-1783* (New York: Basic Books, 2009), 560-562.

Hanover, the Falklands Crisis was, in part, about upholding a powerful reputation in the eyes of the House of Bourbon.

The British political administration tried varied responses to the tensions over Port Egmont. British military policy in the Falklands resembled that of 'gunboat diplomacy' in which Britain hoped to "force Spain into an early and complete surrender, believing naval and financial weakness would ensure the Bourbons would not fight: diplomacy, backed by naval preparations, would force Madrid to accept the British demands."⁹³ Settling on forcing Spain's surrender raised internal conflict between the Southern Secretary of State, Lord Weymouth, and Secretary Dartmouth.

The two men each felt they were responsible for the garrison in the Falklands and could not agree over the divide in their spheres of influence. The conflict became so great that King George himself became involved. In a letter from the King to Lord Weymouth in September of 1770, George expressed his vision for the delegation of power between the two Secretaries of State. He wrote to Weymouth, "I thoroughly approve of the openness and clearness with which you have, in the enclosed draft, given your ideas to Lord Hillsborough on the necessity of more exactly defining your Department..." – the reason the two men stood at odds – "...in case war should arise, lest that secrecy and despatch, on which the success of war must so greatly depend, should suffer by extending the business to too many offices." In this statement, the King made his concern about the repercussions of a ununified cabinet clear. George III recognized that internal strife could jeopardize military operations. He continued to Secretary Weymouth, "Your conduct, during the time you have held the Seals, makes me desirous that this affair should be so far accommodated...On the other hand, I should be sorry Lord Hillsborough felt himself

⁹³ Scott, 143.

aggrieved...”⁹⁴ This letter clearly expresses George’s awareness of the conflict occurring between two of his Secretaries of State. The King’s mediation of the secretarial tension in the middle of the Falklands Crisis meant that the King was having to navigate both burgeoning international and administrative conflicts. Thus, not only was Lord Hillsborough distracted from his secretarial duties pertaining to North America but also was the King in his responsibilities and desire to, at this point, appease his North American subjects. Ultimately, by the end of the year, the Monarch cultivated a disregard for Secretary Weymouth due to how he handled Spanish diplomacy.⁹⁵ This internal power struggle would have caused a greater rift among the already distracted administration, more confusion, and mistrust, all resulting in no cohesion.

In addition to administrative complications, the Falklands Crisis garnered the Monarch’s attention for strategic reasons. In January of 1770, King George III addressed Parliament. He again reaffirmed his commitment that “...it has always been my fixed Purpose to preserve the General tranquility, maintaining, at the same Time, the Dignity and Honour of My Crown, together with the just Rights and Interests of My People...” Yet, this time, unlike in 1768, the Falklands Crisis jeopardized the exact subjects George pledged to protect. He expressed that this desire to “bring the late War to a happy conclusion must be an additional Motive to make Me vigilant to prevent the present Disturbances in Europe from extending to any Part where the Security, Honour, or Interest of this Nation may make it necessary for My Crown to become a Party.” The Monarch, as confident as ever, wanted to reassure Parliament that, if left to him, peace would emerge victorious. He concluded, “The Assurances which I receive from the other great Powers, afford me Reason to believe, that My Endeavours will continue to be successful. I shall still make the General Interests of Europe the Objects of My Attention, and while I steadily

⁹⁴ Jesse, *Memoirs of the Life and Reign of King George the Third*, 510-511.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 149-151.

support My own Rights, I shall be equally careful not to acknowledge the Claims of want other Powers, contrary to the Limitations of the late Treaties of Peace.”⁹⁶

The King's emphasis on Europe suggest that his concern lay with Spanish and France, not the actions of his North American colonists. In 1772, he again expressed a familiar sentiment to his “Lords and Gentlemen.” “...Concerns of this Country are so various and extensive as to require the most vigilant and active Attention, and some of them, as well from Remoteness of Place as from other Circumstances, are so peculiarly liable to Abuses and exposed to Danger,” George spoke in his address to the House of Lords. The King, positioned at the front of the Chamber, then declared “that the Interposition of the Legislature for [the Country's] Protection may become necessary: If in any such Instances, either for supplying Defects or remedying new Laws, you may depend upon My ready Concurrence in whatever may best contribute to the Attainment of those salutary Ends.”⁹⁷ With that speech, King George III made warfare the business of Parliament though the Monarch preserved the right to make peace and war and form treaties with foreign power without Parliamentary permission.⁹⁸ For someone like George who valued his autonomy as the reigning King of England to make this concession suggests that the multilateral threats facing his empire were becoming too much for the young Monarch to bear; and this was before the activity in New England truly crossed his radar.

Finally, the prolonged engagement with Spain and the desire to end the conflict legislatively and diplomatically made foreign policy a priority of the Prime Minister. Prior to the era of the Falklands Crisis, Lord North did frequently partake in decision making about foreign

⁹⁶ “Lords Journals,” 09 January 1770, Vol. 32, 8 GEO. III-10 GEO III, HL/PO/JO/2/32 (London: Parliamentary Archives), 393-394.

⁹⁷ “Lords Journals,” 21 January 1772, Vol. 33, 11 GEO. III-14 GEO III, HL/PO/JO/2/33 (London: Parliamentary Archives), 227-228.

⁹⁸ Jeremy Black, *Parliament and Foreign Policy in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

policy. Now, however, he chose to play a large role in the final stages of the Falklands Crisis due to both his “distrust and dislike” of Southern Secretary Weymouth and “his fear that war would destroy his planned financial recovery and his ministry, made him intervene decisively.” Like the King, but for economic rather than diplomatic reasons, the Prime Minister’s principal objective seemed to be peace with the Spanish and, by extension, the French.⁹⁹ The controversy over the Falkland Islands eventually concluded in 1771. While it did not escalate to a hot war, the Anglo-Spanish standoff proved to be enough to divert the attention of the British political Decision Makers. Spanish posture threatened the neighboring British colonies in North America and the Crisis made this ever clearer. If the British wanted to improve their relationship with Spain, they would have to create a strategy. Yet, simultaneous conflict with France made developing a cohesive strategy for handling both Spain and North America extremely difficult.

France: An Economic and Diplomatic Threat

If the Spanish were the lesser threat for England between France and Spain, then the French were the greater. France posed a threat to Great Britain in South America, India, Europe, and North America making Anglo-Franco relations “the motor nerve of British diplomacy.”¹⁰⁰ French actions, therefore, dictated many British reactions. Just as the Spanish began to develop a relationship with the French in the late 1750s, France too underwent a fundamental shift during the same decade. The 1750s witnessed a “permanent conversion of French policy-makers to the belief that Britain was, and would continue indefinitely to be, France’s main enemy.”¹⁰¹ Thus, it was established in the minds of both British and French Decision Makers that the other country was the main and “most serious” threat to their global positioning and prominence.

⁹⁹ Scott, 148-151.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 205.

¹⁰¹ Baugh, 5.

From 1768 to 1770, Anglo-French relations remained “relatively untroubled” though “fundamental hostility” had “not been seriously weakened, far less removed, but both states now had different priorities and this improved relations.”¹⁰² Though the two states were temporarily distracted from worrying about the actions of the other, it is important to note that different priorities, as Scott describes, did not mean an eradication of underlying tension between England and France. Perceived tranquility did not last long as events over this two-year period caused resigned coexistence to escalate to aggravated tension.

The French experienced economic and military, especially maritime, growth throughout the eighteenth century which manifested in searching for new trading posts. Much to British chagrin, North America and India provided the markets for which the French looked. From 1720 to 1780, France's transatlantic trade grew ten-fold with re-exportation of colonial products to other European ports growing eight-fold. Compared to Great Britain, this equaled 90% of Britain's re-export trade in the 1780s while French seaborne commerce equaled 80% of Britain's cash value in the same decade.¹⁰³ France was rapidly growing in economic power relative to its Anglo brethren. Fiscal stability also made a commercial case for building a strong French navy given the rate of growth of the French Atlantic economy – a statement which could not have gone unnoticed in the years preceding the American War of Independence. Yet, France's economic and maritime burgeoning preeminence was only one concern felt by British Decision Makers. Militarily, the French also posed strategic threats.

First came the island threats of the Falklands and at Corsica. The ramifications for the British of the Falklands Crisis have already been discussed. Corsica, however, posed a new threat. Located off the west coast of Italy, Corsica represented a commercial and military

¹⁰² Scott, 136.

¹⁰³ Baugh, 12.

stronghold for Great Britain in the Mediterranean. Yet, by mid-1769, after nearly a year of debate, France gained full control of Corsica. This purchase reduced British security in the region and left English territory vulnerable to both Spanish and French attacks.¹⁰⁴ France's territorial acquisition was of mild concern to British Decision Makers as events in India quickly overshadowed the trouble in Corsica.

The English territories in India acted as prominent commercial bases for the Crown's empire. Thousands of British political officials and regulars occupied India by the turn of the nineteenth century as a result of the conflict between Britain and France in the subcontinent.¹⁰⁵ Before this conflict ensued, the British first had to overcome their own difficulties in financing and governing British India. Winston Churchill, the future Prime Minister of Great Britain explains this in his survey on the history of the Great Britain. He claims that, "To call [British acquisition of India] 'Imperialist expansion' is nonsense, if by that is meant the deliberate acquisition of political power. Of India it has been well said that the British Empire was acquired in a fit of absence of mind."¹⁰⁶ The reported sporadic nature by which Great Britain acquired India explains many of the challenges Great Britain faced in the subcontinent. Challenges both externally with the French and internally with territorial governance created administrative puzzles which stole the attention of the King, the Prime Minister, and the King's military forces.

Oversight of India primarily fell to Lord North, especially if the problem pertained to economics. The King and governors sought his help for governmental and economic reform in India.¹⁰⁷ As will be discussed in the next chapter, Great Britain faced financial challenges in the years leading up to the war with America. Many of these were a result of the business practices

¹⁰⁴ Simms, 556-557.

¹⁰⁵ Churchill, 214.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 223.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 226.

of the East India Company which suffered from its own difficulties in 1772. Finances were only the beginning of the challenges Great Britain experienced in India.

Governance of India, too, complicated colonization and sparked tensions which created weaknesses in the Crown's South Asian colonies on which France could capitalize. The Crown tried to divide governing responsibilities between the English and Indians but, Churchill explains, "Such division of responsibilities could not last, and was soon to create formidable problems..."¹⁰⁸ Problems that emerged as power struggles between the East India Company and London. No more so was this evident than in Bengal starting in 1774 during which a factional divide between supporters of governor general Warren Hastings and those appointed to the supreme council by Britain under the Regulating Act.¹⁰⁹

In the years leading up to this struggle, the House of Commons became preoccupied with investigating governing practices in India, especially Bengal. Proper rule of Bengal was extremely important because King George III considered the territory to be, in his own words, "the capital of our commerce and revenues."¹¹⁰ It would have been in the King's interest to retain an economically prosperous colony such as Bengal. Yet, the fiscal importance of the state made it a desirable asset for numerous agencies. A general belief that the Crown's servants in Bengal truly represented the Great Britain, not the East India Company surfaced in London. This favoritism increased the intra-Anglo tensions throughout British India and, as historian P.J. Marshall argues, "In the years of peace, relations between the government and the [East India] Company over the defence of India were more fraught than they had been in the Seven Years

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 224.

¹⁰⁹ P.J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, and America c. 17650-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 225.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 242. Here Marshall quotes George III.

War.”¹¹¹ This is so because English presence in India created conflict with both English and preexisting Indian powers. Concern arose back in London that the East India Company would become involved in a war of “uncertain outcome and enormous cost against formidable enemies such as Mysore or the Marathas.” Marshall surmises that, “There could be little doubt that the French would intervene in future conflicts with Indian powers and they were likely to launch attacks on their own account.”¹¹² Given that the European balance of power relied on land power and acquisition, even the perceived threat of a French attack on British territory in India must have concerned the Decision Makers.

The stories of Anglo-Franco and Anglo-Indian relations are inextricably linked by both real and imagined French threats in the South Asian subcontinent. British premonition of a French threat in India actualized after the First Anglo-Mysore War concluded in 1769.¹¹³ Though British and Indian violence characterized this war, complications with France primarily worried the Crown and his administration. Concern arose over the growing French strength at Mauritius throughout 1768. While King George III sent reinforcements to Boston, the French King sent reinforcements to Mauritius. The bolstering of French forces alarmed the Madras Council of India and, by extension, Britain. The Prime Minister and King had, in reality, been misinformed about the actual size of the French force on the island; but the news of French presence, when coupled with the reduction of British forces after a year of fighting the Mysore, raised anxieties over a potential French invasion of India.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Ibid, 218.

¹¹² Ibid, 211.

¹¹³ The First Anglo-Mysore War was partially responsible for the drastic stock crash of the East India Company and the ensuing financial crisis of 1772. The repercussions of which are discussed in Chapter III: The Market.

¹¹⁴ *Fort William – India House Correspondence*, v: 1767-1769, ed. N.K. Sinha (Delhi, 1949), 143, 420-1, 470, 494.

Continuation of the First Anglo-Mysore War exacerbated administration fears. Due to France's growing economic and maritime strength, Britain perceived French governors would next seek a commercial hold in British India. Bengal, they thought, was targeted. Loss of this territory would have destroyed Britain's position in South Asia. In 1769, the French started to fortify the area surrounding Bengali Chandernagore, a principle English trading post. This act would have unnerved Indians, East India Officials, and the Decision Makers.¹¹⁵ French activity in India began to cease in the 1770s; yet, their actions derailed British ambition enough to obscure any inkling of a strategy that King George and his men attempted to develop. Churchill poignantly wrote that "It was otherwise in India, where often the fight went on when in Europe Britain and France were at peace."¹¹⁶ Thus, the general tranquility for which King George III hoped never actually met the English Empire in the prelude to the American War of Independence. The fight over India constantly threatened the English economy, commerce, territorial holdings in South Asia, and global reputation.

Like India, French activity and power also determined Anglo-Russo relations. The Russo-Turkish War dominated eastern Europe from October 1768 to July 1774. This engagement, especially at its beginning, cultivated British foreign policy interest in Russia and Britain began to pursue a Russian alliance in 1768.¹¹⁷ Only by further analyzing Anglo-Franco relations in this period can inquirers truly understand why this shift eastward, parsing the focus of British political Decision Makers, occurred. It was the general perception among ministers that the French were the "real instigator of the conflict [in the Balkans] and this added to their anxieties."¹¹⁸ Therefore, Britain championed a more active Mediterranean policy from 1768 to

¹¹⁵ Scott, 137-138.

¹¹⁶ Churchill, 214.

¹¹⁷ Scott, 127.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 134-135.

1770. Diplomatic efforts from the King himself focused on persuading the Porte to make peace with Russia. Great Britain served as the mediator between the conflicting nations to both intimidate France and draw closer to Russia, playing on dual Anglo and Russo anti-French sentiments.¹¹⁹ Yet, when Great Britain offered aid to a Russian fleet in 1769, diplomatic efforts failed as the Porte perceived this as British favoritism and bias towards their adversary. France then capitalized on the opportunity to gain the favor of the Porte lost by Britain.

By 1770, war with France felt closer than ever. The appearance of the Russian fleet in the Mediterranean Sea led Great Britain to enter brinksmanship with France in the region. Tensions and anxieties continuously increased. Back in Great Britain, however, the Monarch set off to assure Parliament that all fared well in the British Empire. In a speech during a final session to the House of Lords in 1772, King George offered that "...I can with great Pleasure acquaint you, that the Disposition of the Powers of Europe give Me the strongest Reason to believe that this Nation will not be disturbed in the Enjoyment of the Blessings of Peace."¹²⁰ Meanwhile, while the King attempted to persuade his the House of Lords that Britain would see a time of peace, France, evasive of stopping Russia, seemed to support the Turks while Great Britain prepared to reinforce British fleet in the Mediterranean because leaders thought France would embark on naval action.¹²¹

It is difficult to imagine that King George was unaware of the actual situation in the Mediterranean. These preparations for war required the attention, time, and resources of the King, Prime Minister, Secretaries of State, and regional military commanders. Actions taken to deter the French meant that fewer resources existed to support any action, let alone a cohesive

¹¹⁹ Simms, 558.

¹²⁰ "Lords Journals," 09 June 1772, Vol. 33, 11 GEO. III-14 GEO III, HL/PO/JO/2/33 (London: Parliamentary Archives), 456.

¹²¹ Scott, 139.

strategy, in North America. By 1773, both powers – England and France – stepped down from the brink. Tension remained but Lord North professed a particular confidence that France would maintain a weak foreign policy on the eve of the American War of Independence as the French suffered from their own economic strains and Great Britain retained sea superiority.¹²²

The North American Frontier: The “Other” War for American Independence

Many of the global powers demonstrated continued interest in North America during the pre-war era. French and Spanish presence along the frontier of the British colonies disrupted the balance of power between the Anglo-colonists and Indians who occupied the contested territories. This only further complicated the internal tension held by King George regarding his holdings in North America and exacerbated the divisions within his cabinet. The story of the North American frontier provides an example of the global complexities faced by British Decision Makers on the Eve of the American War of Independence. Its narrative, laden with conflict, alliances, and betrayal, brings together the Decision Makers and offers an alternative reason as to why continental events prevented these men from developing a cohesive strategy for ending the rebelliousness in Great Britain's New England colonies.

Frontier activity, old as colonization itself, meant North America could not escape the European threats from 1768 to 1775. The debates across time and space between King George, Lord North, the Secretaries, and Commander in Chief Gage acutely illuminate the complexity of British foreign policy. They provide a lens through which to assess Anglo-Franco, Anglo-Spanish, Anglo-Native, and Anglo-Anglo relations – within the administration – and further suggest why creating a cohesive strategy proved so difficult.

¹²² Ibid, 204.

After the French and Indian War, at least eight Native American tribes shared a theoretical boundary with European colonists.¹²³ The Proclamation Line of 1763, an imaginary line drawn after the French and Indian War, technically prohibited Englishmen from settling west of the Appalachian Mountains. Yet, the Line wielded little authority as both individual colonists and members within the Crown's circle tested the legitimacy of this prohibition. The Line also failed to solve the debate over the contested middle region of the continent. The Decision Makers viewed the middle Mississippi as "disarray." According to accounts, border security was sparse with only "several dozen soldiers and officers, scattered among a few isolated and undermanned forts, were charged with bringing order to the entire region..." which spanned the length of North America. The distance between posts made it "impossible" to effectively impose British policies on English colonists.¹²⁴ Historian Brendan McConville explains that "As population continued to expand and interest in securing orderly control of western lands sharpened, confronting the threat posed by the French and Native Americans became critical to all Britons."¹²⁵ The debate of westward expansion and, by extension, outright defiance of King George III's policies, heightened Anglo-Native American tensions, introduced new threats to the British Empire, and added another task to the ever-increasing list of demands facing the Decision Makers in the late 18th century.

Under both Hillsborough's and Dartmouth's tenures as Colonial Secretary, to include the command of General Gage and the oversight of Lord North, the question of whether the Crown should seek to expand his empire west into North America plagued the minds of the political and

¹²³ These tribes include the: Sioux, Iowa, Meskwaki, Sauk, Illinois, Quapaw, Chickasaw, and Tunica (Saunt, 122).

¹²⁴ Claudio Saunt, *West of the Revolution: An Uncommon History of 1776* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014), 170.

¹²⁵ Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise & Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776* (Virginia: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 232.

military Decision Makers even as conflict began to spark in New England. Concern over both territorial acquisition for the Crown and competition with France and Spain over North America expanded the North American conversation past that of actions in New England. In 1768, Secretary Hillsborough assured a concerned General Gage that, "...His Majesty's servants have not been inattentive to the Dangers that threatens the colonies from those jealousies, which seem at present to influence the conduct of the Savages."¹²⁶ Thus, Decision Makers were aware of the myriad complexities in the New World. With that said, prior to 1772, official English frontier policy abided by the divisions drawn by the Proclamation Line. Once Britain controlled North America, the King issued a royal proclamation preventing colonists from purchasing land on the frontier and prohibiting colonial settlement. Hillsborough, too, maintained a weary demeanor towards westward movement.¹²⁷

He diligently upheld the Board of Trade's anti-expansionist policies, opposing all proposals aimed at colonizing the North American frontier and beyond. Instead, Hillsborough supported settling and developing the coasts. He supported limited expansion for two main reasons. First, the Colonial Secretary constantly considered Spain's position in relation to Great Britain. When it came to the Spanish in North America, Hillsborough sent General Gage a letter marked as "most secret" with a specific warning. In 1771, we wrote, "In this situation it has become necessary to give full scope to the Consideration not only of those measures which it may be proper to pursue for the Defense and Security of His Majesty's Possessions," those facing a Spanish threat on the eastern seaboard, "but also in what places the Enemy may be annoyed and attacked with the greatest Advantage and best Hope of success..." Hillsborough wanted his Commander in Chief to take "absolute steps...preparatory to any Enterprise that may

¹²⁶ Hillsborough to Gage, 12 March 1768, CO 5/86.

¹²⁷ Bargar, 68.

be undertaken.”¹²⁸ When assessing the battlefield and templating the enemy – Spain – focusing military efforts and development along the coast would have seemed to be the clear course of action to Lord Hillsborough. Doing this would have most effectively postured Great Britain to defend against Spain. Second, *focusing on our coastal territory*, the secretary must have believed, *will extend our commerce and navigation and bring economic prosperity to the Crown and the English people*.¹²⁹ He understood the problems of westward expansion and likely assessed that London was not focused enough to be able to effectively and efficiently overcome them.

Hillsborough's policies prohibiting the formation of markets between colonists and Native Americans caused problems, too. Many colonists formed companies which bought frontier land from the Indians and settled west of the Proclamation Line regardless of policy.¹³⁰ P.J. Marshall argues that Hillsborough's inability to “control events on the frontier and because his political colleagues could not resist the blandishments of the speculators” were the primary reasons his restrictive policies ultimately failed.¹³¹ Even the political administration considered anti-expansionism to be controversial. Eventually, this internal conflict became too much for Lord Hillsborough.

Then, in 1772, the first Colonial Secretary resigned and the Earl of Dartmouth became the second Secretary of State for the Colonies. With this administration change also came policy change. The disposition of Native American tribes as well as Lord Dartmouth's personal motives inspired a shift from anti-westward movement to pro-expansion. By the time the new secretary assumed office, an aggressive trend of Indian nativism had developed which preached that “if the

¹²⁸ Hillsborough to Gage, 2 January 1771, CO 5/243.

¹²⁹ Marshall, 323-324.

¹³⁰ Saunt, 21, 25.

¹³¹ Marshall, 324

English, France and Spain are at war[,] all the red people is to be to peace.”¹³² The Native Americans theorized that warring nations would be to their benefit as it meant Great Britain, France, and Spain would be too preoccupied with defeating one another to continue to impose on Native lands. It seemed that the Native Americans resolved to encourage European fighting in North America and would do nothing to halt it. Moreover, increased Native aggressiveness was also evident in that some tribes advocated for military solutions against settlers moving west while others abandoned their alliance with Britain and instead sought partnership with other tribes and Spain.¹³³

Lord Dartmouth, however, did not support Native independence from the empire; but he did hold sincere concerns for the Indians and their welfare. His support for expansion lay in the realization that colonists would continue to move west, regardless of official policy. Thus, the government, thought the Colonial Secretary, needed to be involved to facilitate responsible, nonviolent migration that protected the Native Americans and aided the English colonists.¹³⁴ Yet, in 1774, the Earl of Dartmouth's dreams of expansion dwindled as events in New England shifted the Decision Maker's attention and brought Lord North into the North American scene.

In May of this year, Lord North made it clear to the House of Commons that North America finally demanded his attention. Before 1774, India and the Falklands occupied the Prime Minister's attention. Now he proposed the Coercive Acts – a set of legislations intended to economically and politically subjugate North America to parliamentary authority – and declared that ““We must decide whether we will govern America or whether we will bid adieu to it, and give it that perfect liberty...” The concern, in North's mind, emerged as a zero-sum equation of

¹³² Kathleen DuVal, *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution* (New York: Random House, 2015), 21.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, XXIII.

¹³⁴ Bargar, 69-70.

“[U]nless [the Americans] see you are willing and able to maintain your authority, they will at least in Massachusetts Bay, totally throw it off.”¹³⁵ At the same time that he implored Parliament to take a stance – any stance – on the affairs in North America, Lord North maintained his global focus. He also advocated for measures to curb French progress. The Quebec Act hindered the French in North America by internally regulating governance of Quebec while also reconfiguring Quebec’s borders to include the disputed Ohio territory. This “threatened an encirclement of the thirteen colonies by an absolutist government – a resurrected new France; it restored the pre-1763 threat.”¹³⁶ While Lord North may have been trying to diminish French power in Canada to prevent another Anglo-Franco war on North American soil, his actions only further fueled colonial and frontier unrest.

Thomas Gage, the Commander in Chief of the British Forces in North America, also expressed his opinions about settlement of the frontier throughout 1768 until the eve of the American War of Independence. Given that it would be his men and supplies used to protect and defend any new settlements, General Gage took a general opposition to the idea of expansion. As early as 1764, General Gage wrote to representatives of the Crown that Britain should give up its western fortifications. British regulars were no match for the native tactics. This attitude continued into 1769 when Gage wrote to Hillsborough in February that “There is no good Prospect that the Commerce of the Mississippi will prove of much Advantage to Great Britain.”¹³⁷ As an officer charged with the care of soldiers, General Gage must have been concerned about the costs of engaging in what he perceived to be a futile conflict. As such, it can be imagined that Gage may have exasperatedly contemplated, *why sacrifice the young men*,

¹³⁵ Lord North quoted in P.D.G Thomas, *Tea Party to Independence: The Third Phase of the American Revolution, 1773-1776* (Oxford, 1991), 87.

¹³⁶ Simms, 583.

¹³⁷ Saunt, 179.

deplete the King's resources, and over-expand my forces to a vulnerable state, when penning this opposition letter. A year later, the general again wrote to the secretary that ““There is little appearance that the advantages will arise from [expansion], which nations expect, when they send colonies into foreign countrys...”” While the rest of the administration debated frontier policy, to General Gage, negotiating with the Native Americans and moving west seemed fruitless endeavors. Instead, he resigned to ““Let the savages enjoy their desarts in quiet.””¹³⁸ General Gage entertained enough to worries before considering how to navigate Anglo-Native relationships. Leaving the Native American tribes alone seemed to be the best course of action for the British Regulars. 3000 miles away in England however, administrative divide created by expansion comprised only one of the many complications in the North American backcountry.

French and Spanish presence also jeopardized British security and commercial activity by establishing alliances with Native tribes and preventing English traders from conducting business. The Crown and his officials assumed that Native tribes would support the British if any English garrisons faced threats, especially in the Gulf, in return for British monetary and military aid.¹³⁹ Native Americans disproved this theory in the pre-War period by cultivating relationships with powers outside of the British Empire.¹⁴⁰ France posed a threat in North America militarily around Canada and economically in Hudson's Bay. Spain, though, emerged the real British regional adversary. In 1770, General Gage observed to Lord Hillsborough that Spain and England would be “mutually endeavoring to cultivate the Friendship of every Indian Nation, far

¹³⁸ Gage quoted in Saunt. Ibid, 167.

¹³⁹ DuVal, 108.

¹⁴⁰ “It is also important that when a prince has conquered a foreign state that he become the protector of the surrounding weaker powers, and do all he can to weaken the stronger ones” (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Peter Constantine (New York: Random House), 12)

and near” as long as the Mississippi River separated the two countries.¹⁴¹ This theory rang dangerously true.

Numerous tribes to include the Creeks, Osage, and Chickasaw all allied themselves with Spain as Great Britain gained power in North America. The Creeks emerged Spain's greatest Native ally, especially as they felt progressively endangered and financially crippled as British-Colonial conflict crept southward.¹⁴² Creek anti-Anglo sentiment began in the mid-1760s when the Creek governor told the British that “if any white people settle beyond” the Proclamation Line and the mutually agreed upon sliver of land fifteen miles in from the coast of Florida, British officials “shall never enquire how they came to be killed.”¹⁴³ Creeks directly threatened a British presence in their territory. General Gage advised respecting Creek land and trade. He also frequently alerted the Colonial Secretary of the potential for conflict with the tribe.¹⁴⁴ Yet this initial threat burgeoned into Anglo-Native conflict in the early 1770s.¹⁴⁵ Where the British were really concerned was in what a Spanish-Creek alliance meant for Anglo-Spanish relations in the New World.

Creek territory in Louisiana was strategically important for King George III's empire.¹⁴⁶ Spain also envied the geopolitical disposition of the Native peoples, especially as their partnership might have enabled Spanish ousting of their British neighbors, thereby allowing Spain to accomplish her imperial goals in North America. Correspondence between London and the Spanish minister only escalated this threat. Lord Hillsborough relayed to General Gage his concern that the Spanish minister's language was “not favourable to pacification” and that the

¹⁴¹ Saunt, 167.

¹⁴² Ibid, 199.

¹⁴³ Duval, 31.

¹⁴⁴ CO 5/235.

¹⁴⁵ Saunt, 195.

¹⁴⁶ DuVal, 117.

commander should prepare to increase armaments in North America, depending on Spanish actions.¹⁴⁷ Thus, the hostile interactions with Spain raised alarm among the Decision Makers and diverted their attention to south east North America. The desire for Creek territory only increased the pressure mounting between these two super powers.

The Creek worked closely with the Spanish located in Havana, Cuba – a powerful city comparable to that of British controlled Charleston, South Carolina.¹⁴⁸ Estimaslaiyche, the Creek warrior leader, even went to Havana and assured the Spaniards that “his men were charged with patrolling the entire Florida Gulf Coast, ready to attack any and all English fishermen and colonists” in 1773. He informed Spain that his men planned to declare war against the British in the Spring until they “destroyed [the British] entirely.”¹⁴⁹ The King of Spain even admitted to wanting to avenge the British for Spanish losses in the Seven Year’s War but declined to help the Creeks.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, the threat of Creek-Spanish military alliance and potential war with the Creeks loomed in the minds of the British Decision Makers.

The Osage and Chickasaw Indian tribes provide two more examples of Spanish allied Natives who hindered Anglo-Native relations and trade. The Chickasaw especially illuminate this trend. Attempting to foster a working relationship with the tribe consumed English attention in the Gulf Coast.¹⁵¹ One tribe, the Cherokee, did remain loyal to the British colonists. Cherokee leader Attakullakulla worked with the Englishmen due to economic necessity. In mid-March of 1775, the Cherokee signed an agreement, against the King’s will, with colonists to move westward.¹⁵² Increased Spanish activity concerned British political and military Decision Makers

¹⁴⁷ Hillsborough to Gage, 11 December 1770, CO 5/243.

¹⁴⁸ Saunt, 202.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 198.

¹⁵⁰ “Declaraciones del Patron Manuel Caello, y el Capitan Estimaslaiyche,” 15 February 1773.

¹⁵¹ DuVal, 20-22.

¹⁵² Saunt, 22-23.

as it threatened English North American colonies, trade and commerce, and Anglo-Native relations.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

By the time King George began serious preparations for war with his North American subjects in 1774, the American War of Independence was only a year away. For the seven years preceding British armament for colonial war, the King, the Prime Ministers, the Secretaries of State for the Colonies, and the Commander in Chief of British Forces in North America had been focused on almost anything but the uprisings in Boston and the surrounding New England colonies. When New England did capture their attention, it did so amid the backdrop of multiple geopolitical threats. France, Spain, Native Americans, India, Russia, and multiple other European Countries diverted the focus, both collectively and individually, of British political and military Decision Makers.

Decision Makers needed to look critically at where and how limited resources would be spent from 1768 to 1775 to respond to the various geopolitical threats facing the British Empire. Simms summarizes this dilemma well by recounting, "But in its origin and essence, the struggle in America was a particularly drastic form of debate between two visions of British grand strategy;" one American-centric and one empire-centric.¹⁵³ Either approach ended in warfare because of failed diplomacy and, more importantly, failure to create a unified vision for British foreign policy. The security threats to the British mainland, her allies, and her colonies presented the Decision Makers with complex challenges competing for their attention against the rising insurrection in New England. However, the influence of global geopolitical events did not stop in

¹⁵³ Simms, 582.

the worlds of warfare and diplomacy; rather, many of these engagements the 1760s and 1770s precipitated economic challenges for the Crown.

Chapter III: The Market

*“Wherever we find agreeable manners, there commerce flourishes; and that wherever there is commerce, there we meet with agreeable manners.”*¹⁵⁴

The Seven Years' War financially burdened Great Britain and the North American colonies. Between fees paid to the Indian negotiating party, the assumption of previously French-owned territory in North America, and the responsibility of the Crown to protect the western frontier along the Proclamation Line, England faced unparalleled expenses when it came to North America.¹⁵⁵ Immediately after the Seven Years' War, Britain's national debt doubled to £133,000,000.¹⁵⁶ Attempting to alleviate some of this debt, English Treasury officials shifted colonial policy. Britain revived manufactured export and re-export trade. The colonial revenue system was reorganized to make the plantation duty profitable for the Crown.¹⁵⁷

These policies all placed the burden of English debt on the colonists. To the Decision Makers, this appeared a fair exchange given that it was the colonists that the British forces were sent abroad to defend.¹⁵⁸ The logic followed that security increases regional efficiency and productivity. Colonial profits would then increase. Defense would be funded by greater taxation of North America. Britain then would not be fronting the finances to fund defense while simultaneously reaping the benefits of profitable colonies.¹⁵⁹

Part of the policy changes also included British Decision Makers, especially the King, taking more centralized control of the colonies. With these policies in place, the mercantile

¹⁵⁴ Montesquieu, “Spirit of the Laws,” Book 20, Chapter 1.

¹⁵⁵ Great Britain paid £13,546,141 sterling to the Indian negotiating party. See: “Sir William Johnson's Account of the Expence of the Indian Congress Lately held with them for the Settlement of the Indian Boundaries,” November 1768, CO 5/87.

¹⁵⁶ Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 50.

¹⁵⁷ Charles M. Andrews, *The Colonial Period of American History: England's Commercial and Colonial Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), 216.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 423.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 217-218. See also: Michael Pearson. *Those Damned Rebels: The American Revolution as Seen through British Eyes* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1972), 17-18.

system in North America began to solidify. Yet, British mercantilism exhibited its own unique flaws. Financial crises, colonial uprisings, and the costs of running a global empire exposed the weaknesses of the English economy during the pre-War years. The domestic financial disarray experienced in England influenced British political Decision Makers, each in their own way, distracting them from establishing a unified military strategy in North America. Ultimately, the story of the coming of the American War of Independence would not be complete without an assessment of the British economy and the domestic distractions it caused.

British Colonial and Commercial Policy

Mercantilism dominated British colonial and commercial policy by the beginning of the eighteenth century. Mercantilist theory asserts that trade supported by protectionist government policies is the key to national wealth. Though never legislated as official English policy, the British Empire adopted mercantilism as its predominating trade policy, especially when interacting with her colonies and considering how best to meet the needs of the growing and expanding British state, both at home and abroad.¹⁶⁰ In theory, a mercantilist system should promote peace as it encourages economic interdependence and cooperation between nations.¹⁶¹ If this is true, then the converse also holds that a closed system begetting economic isolation within an empire would promote conflict when one party feels neglected, betrayed, or refuses to comply. With these principles of mercantilism in mind, the story of English financial strain begins to unfold.

The mercantilist system gave rise to a British trade route which spanned European and African countries, China, and, most notably, British India, and North America by the 1770s.¹⁶² A

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 2.

¹⁶¹ For elaboration on this theory, see Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, Book 20.

¹⁶² Ralph Davis. *A Commercial Revolution: English Overseas Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1967), 3-4.

system as large as Great Britain's trade network required deliberate and clear leadership to ensure smooth execution. Originally, the Privy Council assumed responsibility for the administration and oversight of English North American trade. However, the clarity of to whom the Crown delegated authority was quickly obscured as the century progressed and the North American colonies rose in economic prominence. In addition to the Privy Council, the Lords of Trade, in conjunction with the Prime Minister, also legislated trade policy. The Lords of Trade wielded a collective reputation for being "consistently mercantilist in its relations to trade and the colonies" and "conservative in its defense of the King's prerogative in America."¹⁶³ Many members championed these policies as they were more concerned with diplomacy and commercial interests, fields in which they could garner power or wealth, rather than empowering plantations as seats of governance.¹⁶⁴ This emphasis would have contributed to Great Britain fronting most of the costs of crippled North American trade as the War drew nearer.

The Townshend Acts of 1764 to 1766 added another organization to the already large cohort dedicated to colonial and commercial policy. The Acts established the American Board of Customs Commissioners. Holding its first session in November of 1767, this Board focused on tightening financial regulation and oversight in North America.¹⁶⁵ Then, in 1768 with the creation of the Office of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, financial regulative power was again diffused as the Colonial Secretary was awarded economic authority in North America. British merchants, who adopted the title of 'mercantilists,' also felt they deserved a say in colonial trade policy as they directly dealt with the colonists. The mercantilists, like the Lords of

¹⁶³ Andrews, 291.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 299.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 220-221.

Trade, argued for the Crown and Parliament to exert more control over the colonial economic administration; thereby taking control away from colonial governors.¹⁶⁶

This movement contributed to the growing rift between mainland England and her colonies and inspired political lobbying efforts which further acted as a distraction for the Decision Makers as they considered various courses of actions in North America. Ultimately, the combination of the Privy Council, Lords of Trade, Board of Customs Commissioners, and Office of the Secretary of State for the Colonies in developing trade policy, coupled with the political pressures created by the mercantilist groups, generated confusion over the delegation of power in regulating and overseeing the North American financial systems. Moreover, the continued confusion would have negatively affected the key Decision Makers intimately involved in these organizations such as the Prime Minister and Secretary of State and, by extension, the King. This distraction created by the structure of the colonial trade system contributed to the failure of British leaders to establish a consistent North American military strategy.

Imperative to understanding British pre-War mercantilism is identifying the four “self-evident” truths which characterized governmental policies towards colonies. First, colonial interests and advantages were to be subordinated to those of Britain. Second, Britain asserted a right to restrict the trade of the North American colonies to her own mainland subjects. This manifested in an English monopoly over colonial output and carrying trade. Third, any surplus commodities of the colonies should be sent solely to the mother country. Finally, all trade and resources of the North American colonies should be kept from competing rivals.¹⁶⁷ With these guiding truths, Britain constructed a closed economy with North America in the pre-War period of 1768 to 1775. Resulting from an increased governmental interest in North America, the

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 187.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 7, 13-14.

Crown proceeded to trade only within his own empire in an attempt to exclude all foreign markets and influences and develop a system which benefitted Britain and tilted the balance of trade in the motherland's favor.

Mercantilism took a specific form in British North American-mainland trade. When functioning, England was meant to be a "self-sufficing" empire in which the different colonies each contributed their products, such as food or textiles, to the mother country. In theory, Britons would never have to seek outside of the empire for goods. Ultimately, the colonial and domestic markets "formed a single economic and commercial whole, made up of widely scattered but cooperative members, each of which contributed something to the strength and profit of the whole."¹⁶⁸ What emerged was a closed economic system between Great Britain and her colonies.

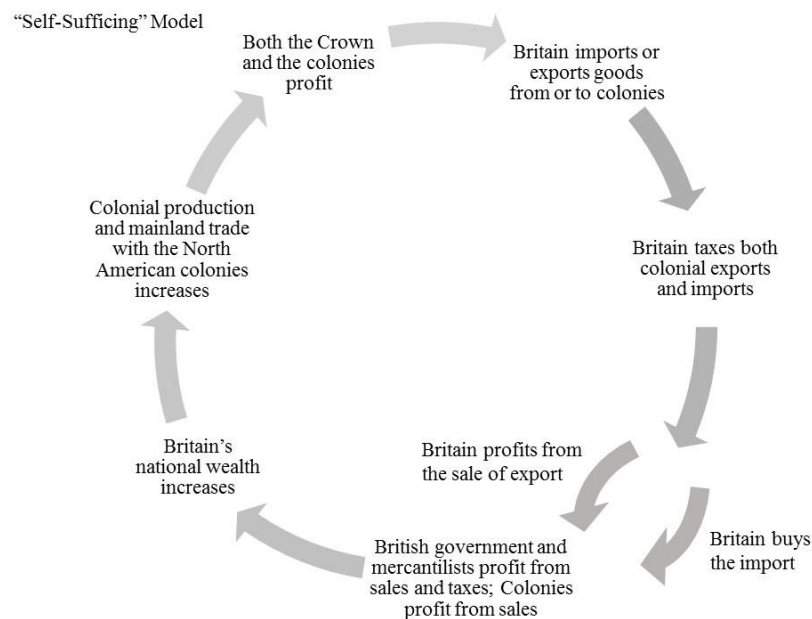


Figure 2. The "Self-Sufficing" Model of British colonial trade depicts the mercantilist cycle between Great Britain and the North American colonists in peacetime when functioning at maximum efficiency. In an ideal world, colonial and commercial policy would function as such. Both the Crown and the colonies benefit in this model.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 345. I use Andrews' term "Self-Sufficing" to describe the model of functioning British colonial trade. See Figure 1 for an explanation.

This dependence caused two major problems. First, it gave way to an increased Anglicization, or British identity, in the minds of the North American colonists. As economic historian T.H. Breen explicates, “The Anglo-American consumer society of the eighteenth century drew the main-land colonists closer to the culture of the mother country” from the creation of a shared experiential framework” created by the use and appreciation of similar goods. This gave the Americans a “means to communicate across social and spatial boundaries.”¹⁶⁹ The American subjects, therefore, envisioned themselves as British, speaking the same commercial language, and perceiving kinship through shared values. Conversely, England did not share this mindset. Rather, due to the belief in the supremacy of the “self-evident” truths of colonial trade, English authorities regarded the colonies solely as a source of raw materials for England, not as the foundations for an expanded empire.¹⁷⁰ The Crown never viewed the colonists as an extension of the British people; only as an extension of British commercial exploits.

The asymmetric views of the colonists and their ruler are emblematic of the disconnect between the Decision Makers in Whitehall and the subjects in North America. While the colonies sought regard as economic and political equals, the Decision Makers, especially the Colonial Secretaries, thought otherwise when considering subjugation to the law. Lord Hillsborough expressed his perspective in the *London Magazine*. He wrote, “The right to tax to be included in the general supremacy, and the alteration of charters, and the force necessary to carry either or both into effectual execution to flow consequently from the supreme power of the state over the several component parts of the Britannic empire.”¹⁷¹ This perspective which held

¹⁶⁹ T.H. Breen, “Baubles of Britain: The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century,” *Past & Present*, No. 119 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 84,87.

¹⁷⁰ Andrews, 7-8.

¹⁷¹ Lord Hillsborough excerpt from the *London Magazine*, 1776. Quoted in Clark, 201.

that Parliament, not the colonial assemblies, should be the ultimate ruling body, was shared by much of the British leadership in this time. To both Secretary Hillsborough and then Secretary Dartmouth, England's right to tax the colonies seemed to be a natural right when considering their understanding of the mother country-colony relationship. Taxation would have been an obvious revenue source for the Crown. The Decision Makers did not foresee the ideological implications; rather, fame and fortune obscured their perspectives.

Moreover, the opportunity for profit and global prestige resulting from colonial holdings would have influenced the political and military leaders as they made decisions leading to war. As another economic historian Ralph Davis explains, colonial trade "contributed heavily towards that general spiral of development, that expansion of demand, which was fact making England an industrial nation."¹⁷² This reliance on colonial trade for the financial well-being of the mother country meant that any fragility in the colonial market would yield negative ramifications back in Great Britain, too. As it was, development, profit, and industrialization, not the colonists' English identity, were the government's primary concern. A concern which catalyzed the second ramification of the of the closed North American-mainland economy.

The mercantilist circuit left the British economy extremely fragile to economic volatility, whether domestic or foreign. In times of peace, the British Empire could be "self-sufficing." However, the system was not designed to absorb the shock of colonial discontent or financial crises. While England may have encouraged free trade within its empire, the mercantilism of the eighteenth century still limited economic expansion as Great Britain relied on its own subjects rather than the foreign markets. Due to the closed market between England and her colonies, especially as Parliament increasingly restricted North American colonial trade to be solely with

¹⁷² Davis, *A Commercial Revolution*, 22.

England as the American War of Independence drew nearer, if the colonial purse suffered, so too did the Crown's.

Challenges of the East India Trading Company

Great Britain primarily relied on the East India Company to facilitate trade with her colonies around the globe. Once a private company, by 1768, the East India Company was well on its way to assumption by the English government. The Bank of England, one of the largest financial entities in the country, made large loans to both the government and the East India Company. Davis explains this investment originated from "The rapidly expanding industrial production of the later eighteenth century" which "revealed a new need for circulating as well as fixed capital."¹⁷³ No longer did financing trade fall on the merchants themselves; rather, as industry increased, so too did the responsibility of state-sponsored or affiliated organizations to fund ventures. Increased government intervention made the government in addition to the merchants susceptible to market fluctuations.

In theory, removing independent groups from the mercantilist trade circuit should have increased market efficiency between Britain and the North American colonies as it established a direct link between the supplier and the demander of goods. Commerce should have flourished, in the words of Montesquieu, without an intermediary market obfuscating the economic relationship between Great Britain and her North American colonies; and therefore, to continue Montesquieu statement, should have beget a cycle of peace. This may have been a partial reality but economies do not operate in a vacuum. In the closed mercantilist system, reliance on a single, nearly government-ran company such as the East India Company left the market

¹⁷³ Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1915), 248-249.

susceptible to financial pressures. Yet, the British Empire seemed invincible, especially to something as seemingly small as a market shock.

Then, in June of 1769, the East India Company's stocks plummeted. This marked the beginning of a financial crises which reached its zenith in 1772. To save the company and right the economy, the British government officially brought the East India Company entirely under government control.¹⁷⁴

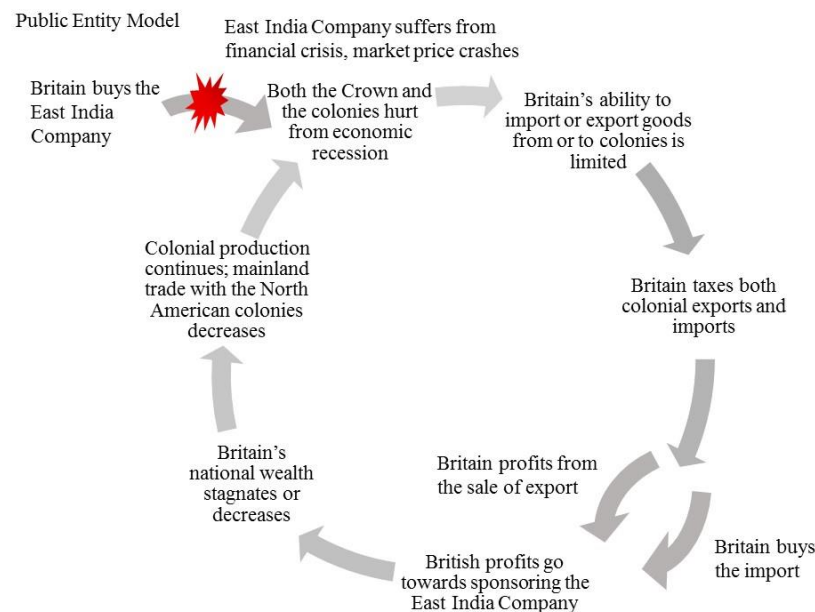


Figure 3. The Public Entity Model depicts one potential weakness of British colonial trade. This model demonstrates the susceptibility of the British-American mercantilist cycle to market volatility and the negative economic impacts which can follow.

This act of government intervention proved to be of no avail under the weight of the Company's failing finances. Rather, the financial crisis led to many companies filing for bankruptcy due to the drastic fall in the East India Company's stock. According to King George III, England suffered from a "fresh stagnation of Credit" and could not seem to recover.¹⁷⁵ From 1772 to

¹⁷⁴ Charles R. Ritcheson, *British Politics and the American Revolution* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), 154.

¹⁷⁵ Ritcheson, 155.

1774, British European produce exports also consistently fell.¹⁷⁶ This lack of revenue magnified the effects of the East India Company's default. Additionally, civil disobedience in Great Britain accompanied the ever-increasing economic problems. Unemployment caused unrest, unease, and anxiety; workers went on strike and petitioned the government as food prices soared; desperation led to acts of aggression, especially by weavers, coal-heavers, and tanners which resulted in suppression by force. Industry stagnated as crisis after crisis occurred.¹⁷⁷ England's economy took hit after hit; making prolonged stability operations in Boston less and less feasible as resources dwindled and attention shifted inwards to the domestic economy.

Inconsistency in both the financial and government sectors contributed to the magnitude of the economic crisis. Financially, England constructed a fragmented financial structure, even in 1774 on the eve of the War for Independence.¹⁷⁸ Politically, the Decision Makers were distracted in focus and could not agree on how to handle the financial crisis and the East India Company in North America and India.¹⁷⁹ Political infighting over the economic crisis exacerbated the inability to create a strategy for North America. It is in this period that we begin to see different schools of thought clearly emerge within the administration on taxation or economic sanctions versus military force.

Altering colonial taxation and regulatory measures became one response to this crisis. The Tea Act, proposed by Lord North and later passed by Parliament in May of 1773, was meant to provide the East India Company an outlet at which the Company's surplus tea could be purchased inexpensively. The Act designated the North American colonies this outlet. Lord

¹⁷⁶ Davis, *A Commercial Revolution*, 20.

¹⁷⁷ John Shy, *Towards Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965) 394-395.

¹⁷⁸ Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise & Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776* (Virginia: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 241.

¹⁷⁹ For more on the East India Company in India, see Chapter II: The Neighbors, "France: An Economic and Diplomatic Threat."

North assumed that providing the Americans limitedly taxed tea would incentivize the colonists to conduct legal trade, especially with the East India Company, then profits and, in turn, stock prices should have risen again. This economic Act, seemingly uncontroversial, inspired division within the royal administration, especially between the Prime Minister and the Colonial Secretary. A divide which moved the Decision Makers further from unity. While Lord North defended the Tea Act, and adamantly stated that, "I must see a very substantial reason before I part with a fund so applicable to the support of Civil [Government]."¹⁸⁰ Down the hall in his London office, the Secretary of State for the Colonies maintained a different attitude towards solving the financial crisis.

As the debates about the Tea Act raged, Lord North kept Secretary Dartmouth in the dark about the policy which would eventually escalate controversy in the Secretary's colonies. The Treasury regarded the Tea Act as a revenue bill which, therefore, did not concern the Colonial Secretary.¹⁸¹ Perhaps not malicious, this is one example of the inefficiency and oversight oft experienced in the British government. When the opportunity came for Dartmouth to voice his opinion on the Act, however, he consistently remained in opposition. Even in to 1774, Lord Dartmouth confided in the retired Southern Secretary, Lord Shelburne, of his "determination to cover America from the present storm to the utmost of his power, even to repealing the Act."¹⁸² Remaining true to his dove-like character, Lord Dartmouth sought to aid the colonies and bring them back under the supremacy of Parliament, not suppress them militarily. The Tea Act, he thought, would only further isolate the North American subjects. Parliament ultimately voted to retain the Tea Act under Lord North's adamant pleas. Yet, North's logic regarding the

¹⁸⁰ Cavendish Debates, Egerton Ms. 246, p. 6 (BM).

¹⁸¹ Bargar, 96.

¹⁸² Shelburne to Chatham, 15 March 1774, Taylor and Pringle, *Correspondence of Chatham*, IV, 334-336.

effectiveness of the Tea Act on increasing revenue for the East India Company did not hold.

Instead, colonial agitation, much inspired by the Tea Act, only further strained British economic activity and the administrative schism widened as members debated coercion, appeasement, and force.

Trouble in the Colonies

While the mainland economy suffered and debates consumed Parliament and the Ministry, the North American colonists simultaneously contributed to crippling England's financial strength. After 1764, Parliamentary legislation regarding the colonies interfered with colonial prosperity and growth.¹⁸³ Realizing this gave rise to negative sentiment among the colonies about the mercantilist system of which they were a part as an extension of the British Empire. As early as 1769, non-importation and non-exportation movements emerged. General Gage quickly alerted his superior of this movement. He wrote to Lord Hillsborough, "The Merchants at Boston have entered into a new subscription against importation, till some more Acts are repealed, as well as that which first gave Rise to the association for Non-Importation." The General then provided his opinion that, "it is generally believed their Example will not be followed by other Provinces," thereby diminishing the importance of the non-importation movement.¹⁸⁴ The Commander's trivialization of the economic rebellion emerging in the colonies falsely assuaged concerns of the English Decision Makers. It enabled them to delay formulating an effective strategy in North America as the colonies were not perceived as a viable threat to economic well-being. Yet, fueled by a combination of practical and ideological motivations, colonial resistance to British commercial efforts essentially halted the cycle of trade as England relied on the North American colonies as a main trading partner.

¹⁸³ Andrews, 179.

¹⁸⁴ Gage to Hillsborough, 4 December 1769, CO 5/234.

Contrary to the administration's belief, non-importation and exportation swept the eastern seaboard from 1769 to 1770 and again in 1774. Every colony except for New Hampshire legislated some form of an agreement by the end of 1769. Threatened by the show of colonial solidarity, Lord Hillsborough and the administration, at large, ordered all ships currently in Halifax to move to Boston Harbor as quickly as possible. Hillsborough explained, "The object of this measure is to check further violences, prevent illicit trade, and to defend and support the Officers of the Revenue in the execution of their duty, and the Magistrates in the enforcement of the Law within the Harbour of Boston and Province of Massachusetts' Bay..."¹⁸⁵ He thought a show of force, not necessarily the execution of it, could deter future colonial resistance. This strategy temporarily worked as non-importation and non-exportation movements slowed. In their place, however, emerged more violent reactions to British economic policies.

Beginning with the Gaspee incident in June 1772 and culminating with the Charleston Tea Party in December 1774, colonists actively destroyed British goods. This restricted the potential for profit from sales or taxes. In October 1773, cargo ships were burned at Annapolis. In December, the infamous Boston Tea Party occurred. Twelve days later, a similar event occurred in Philadelphia. Spearheaded by Boston and New York, boycotts and non-importation regained traction in 1774. Rhode Island and Virginia also actively agreed to boycott importing British goods or exporting to Britain. Finally, as the year ended, colonists in New York and Charleston committed their own tea parties.

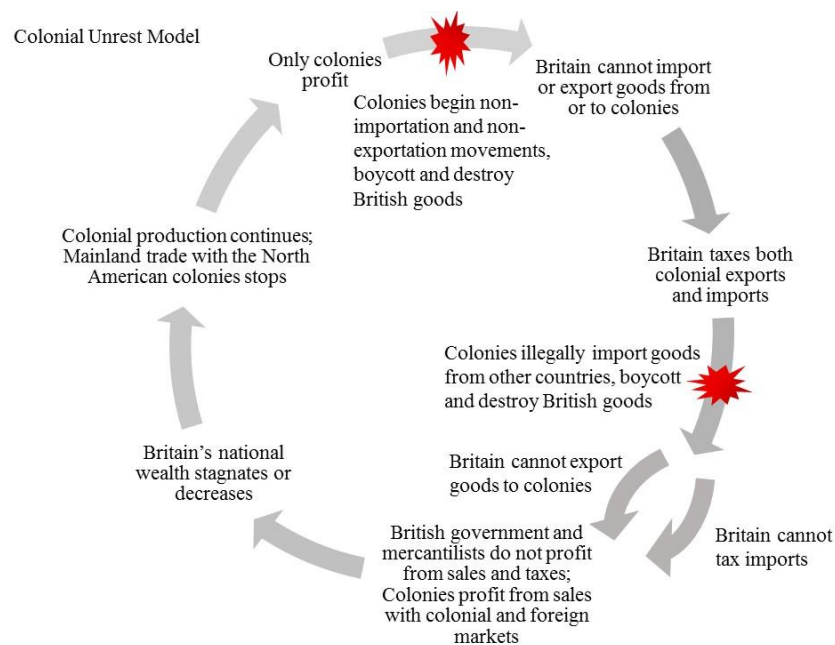
In addition to the physical destruction of British assets, North American colonies such as Philadelphia, Boston, New York, and Charleston, fell into debt to European creditors.¹⁸⁶ Tobacco producers like Maryland and Virginia also incurred debt. These two colonies alone accounted for

¹⁸⁵ Hillsborough to the Lords of the Admiralty, 07 July 1770, CO 5/765.

¹⁸⁶ Davis, *Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, 282.

60% of the total colonial debt to Britain on the eve of the War for Independence.¹⁸⁷ Colonial debt meant that the Crown did not receive the revenue from the colonies. Considering that England founded colonies for trade and profitability, indebted colonies defeated the entire purpose of financing these ventures.

The aggregate of colonial dissent and indebtedness would have yielded detrimental effects on England's economy. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, foreign trade, to include colonial trade, grew progressively more important for the English economy due to the geographic scope of Britain's trading partners.¹⁸⁸ By the eighteenth century, traders considered New England to possess ten times the trading goods as the other colonies and thus was an important set of colonies for England.¹⁸⁹ Thus, anti-trade movements occurring around Britain's primary trading partners, the North American colonies, on whom Britain relied to maintain the balance of trade in the Crown's favor, would have detrimentally affect both the English economy and the mindsets of British Decision Makers.



¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 266.

¹⁸⁸ Davis, *A Commercial Revolution*, 4.

¹⁸⁹ Andrews, 347.

Figure 4. The Colonial Unrest Model depicts another weakness of British colonial trade. This model demonstrates how the British-American mercantilist cycle fails if the colonies decide to not cooperate. Again, the negative economic impacts are shown.

Data on the value of goods exported to North America in 1768 and in 1769 highlights the drastic drop in exports, and by extension profits, over the course of just one year. In 1768, goods exported to North America were valued at £2,500,000 pounds. Only one year later, this value dropped to £1,635,000 pounds.¹⁹⁰ This is a profit loss of 35% in a year before destructive boycotts even began. After the non-importation movement reemerged in 1774, Britain experienced a decrease of over 90% in the value of British imports by the colonies.¹⁹¹ These repercussions concerned the administration and only contributed to the divisions among the Decision Makers on how to handle North America. It seemed to many that the North American colonies were beginning to become too expensive to maintain and that something needed to be done. The question, however, was ‘What?’.

The trouble caused by the colonies, especially in 1773, inspired more debates among the Ministry. While these debates included the price of duty to be placed on tea, a much larger question needed answering after the destructive actions taken by the Americans – should the Crown use coercive tactics to maintain his authority in North America? This time, Lord North and Lord Dartmouth stood on the same side, though conflicted in their own positions. Neither man wanted to resort to coercion. Yet, both worked to pass the Boston Port Bill which would shut down the Port of Boston to end colonial disorder and “secure the [economic] dependence of the colonies.”¹⁹² The logic, according to General Frederick Haldimand, the officer in charge

¹⁹⁰ Ritcheson, 131.

¹⁹¹ Trevor N. Dupuy and Gay M. Hammerman, *People & Events of the American Revolution* (New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1974), 35-36.

¹⁹² *Parliamentary History*, XVII, 1163-1164.

while General Thomas Gage was on leave reporting in London, was that, “The [Boston Port Act] should prove sufficient to restore the good order and harmony so essential to Great Britain and her Colonies, to assure the Dependence of the latter in the Kingdom of Britain, and in time remove the Prejudices now subsiding.”¹⁹³ Economic pressure should work, the Decision Makers thought. Coercion, they assumed, would mitigate the necessity for military force.

Thus, in a rare moment, March of 1774 experienced a brief unity of mind – whether willingly or begrudgingly – between the King, the Prime Minister, the Colonial Secretary, and the Commander in Chief. The administration felt optionless. Coercion appeared the only adequate course of action because, as Lord North declared when lobbying Parliament’s support for the Port Bill, one of the pieces of legislation included in the Coercive Acts, “If [the Americans] deny authority in one instance, it goes to all; we must control them or submit to them.”¹⁹⁴ Faced with colonial opposition, Parliament still voted in favor of the Coercive Acts, to include the Boston Port Bill. Uncertainty loomed over what to do after the enactment of this legislation. Strategic cohesion disbanded once again as members of the Ministry began to retreat from their forceful approach to colonial governance while the King grew more resolute in his desire to escalate legislative force to military action in North America. Meanwhile, amid these philosophical debates of how to subjugate the colonies still lay the practical problem of financing the North American experiment.

Over-expanded and Underfunded: The Costs of an Empire

By the eighteenth century, British Decision Makers must have understood the mounting cost of maintaining unruly colonies in an empire which included holdings in Europe, Asia, the Americas, and Africa. From the systemic costs associated with colonial and commercial policy

¹⁹³ Haldimand to Hillsborough, 1 June 1774, CO 5/235.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 1166-1167.

to the logistical oversight of such a diverse empire, not to mention the burden of maintaining a substantial military presence in not only North America but also in all British colonies, a cost-benefit analysis suggests that England may have been over-expanded on the Eve of War.

The costs associated with trade increased as trade expanded outside of England and the European continent. As Ralph Davis explains, “Because of the distances over which goods were now carried and the new kinds of uncertainty involved in very long-distance trades, the amount of capital needed for carrying on trade grew much faster than the value of trade itself.”¹⁹⁵ The increased cost of maintaining trade only added to the financial strain pulling on the English economy at the end of the 18th century. To sustain trade, the Crown increased the size of his fleet to meet the new demands of his overseas markets. Debts then increased as merchants – to include the East India Company – required larger credit lines to fund ventures and government interest in problems associated with colonial trade also grew.¹⁹⁶ These changes would have required deliberate thought, attention, and time from British political Decision Makers; thus, yet another logistical puzzle was introduced in the pre-War period as running an empire, not just thirteen colonies on the eastern seaboard of North America, consumed the minds of the elites.

North America territory acquisition and expansion also contributed to the costliness of the British Empire. The Treaty of Paris, which ended the Seven Years' War in 1763, added Canada, Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, the Floridas, Senegal, Grenada, Tobago, Dominica, and St. Vincent, as well as the right to navigate the Mississippi River, to the Crown's domain. As discussed earlier, the Seven Years' War hindered Britain's economy. While these territories wielded potential trading benefits for mercantilists and traders, they also received military support, further draining Parliament's purse. Financial reports from Quebec, St. Augustine, and

¹⁹⁵ Davis, *A Commercial Revolution*, 12.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 13-14. See also: Davis, *Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, 235-236 and Andrews, 8-9.

Florida generally – three colonies which, when aggregated – span the length of British North America, provide an overview of the average cost of these new acquisitions. At the beginning of the 1770s, two piles of barracks for one battalion cost £9190.14.6 (Quebec currency) in Quebec.¹⁹⁷ In St. Augustine, one battalion cost £6680.16.6 (New York currency) to raise.¹⁹⁸ Finally, in Florida, two piles of barracks for lodging six companies, a fraction of the number of troops stationed in the Florida territory at the time, cost £13,642.8.0 (New York currency). Repairs on these buildings set the Crown back another £760.0.0 (New York Currency).¹⁹⁹ These are just a few examples of the logistical costs of building a military presence throughout North America. They fail to address the personnel costs such as food and pay, the price for munitions, and any other unexpected expenses. They also do not highlight the debates over the strategic value of garrisons which also emerged among members of the ministry.

Given his vantage point from North America, Commander in Chief Gage yielded opinions about the benefits and costs of establishing and maintaining certain military posts. One such post was the costly site at St. Augustine. The General provided his recommendation to Lord Hillsborough. He wrote, “I am of the opinion that St. Augustine is an inconvenient station, both on account of Danger...” – likely alluding to the Spanish and Native threats in the region – “...and Impediments of the Bar and that Transports must be provided in other Ports, which must occasion Delay in an Embarkation.”²⁰⁰ Gage perceived that St. Augustine provided neither strategic nor economic benefit for the crown and he attempted to communicate this to his counterparts 3000 miles away. These factors also needed to be considered when assessing the

¹⁹⁷ “Estimate for Barracks at Quebec,” 07 January 1769, CO 5/87.

¹⁹⁸ “The Estimate of Materials and their Expenses for the Proposed Barracks at St. Augustine,” 07 January 1769, CO 5/87.

¹⁹⁹ Expense Estimates for Pensacola, Florida, 27 June 1771, CO 5/234.

²⁰⁰ Gage to Hillsborough, 23 April 1770, CO 5/234.

myriad costs facing the British Empire. While the accounts from Quebec, St. Augustine, and Florida are by no means complete, their insight is still valuable when telling the story of the various pressures faced by the British political and military Decision Makers in the coming of the American War of Independence as they express, though partially, one of the many expenses of maintaining a global empire.

Costs only increased from the time the British Regulars arrived in Boston in 1768. From the onset, Great Britain tried to govern Boston in two financially-draining ways. First, England desired to continue to colonize North America and use the vast territory as a source for raw material and trading repository for excess British goods. In the first year of the occupation, the crown paid over £500,000,000 in salaries alone of the officers tasked with managing Indian Affairs.²⁰¹ French presence in the frontier also increased costs associated with managing a relationship with Native Americas. To prevent the illicit entry of smuggled French goods” “into the Kings Territory,” General Gage recommended erecting forts to prevent French trading and hunting anywhere east of the Mississippi.²⁰² Recommendations such as this and other concerns about the Ohio Region and, more generally, the North American frontier, flood correspondences between the Commander in Chief and the Colonial Secretary. This intimates that both men were concerned about trade and profitability in North America – not just the budding insurrection occurring in the north east. Therefore, financial considerations distracted the Decision Makers as they considered the feasibility of supporting multiple operations. Supporting a colony with the dream of profitability is an expensive endeavor, in and of itself. When coupled with navigating preexisting boundaries and attempting to establish new boundaries, all while establishing security, these expenses dramatically increase.

²⁰¹ 1768, CO 5/86.

²⁰² Gage to Hillsborough, 3 February 1769, CO 5/87.

Sending a substantial military force, funded by the British people, to Boston also added another layer of expenses to the already pricey operation.²⁰³ Expenses for maintaining a military presence in Boston display the true costliness of the over expanded British Empire. Try as he may, the Secretary of the Treasury pressured General Gage to bring military expenses under strict control and instructed that no new works began in North America unless approved by the Treasury.²⁰⁴ However, Gage and the rest of the British Decision Makers did not heed this warning long as evidenced by maintaining a military presence in Boston with the expensive mission of aiding the civil authority in maintaining the peace.

Correspondences between the War Office, the Colonial Secretary, and the Commander in Chief offer enlightening information about the costs of managing and protecting the Boston colonists. These records document salaries for government officials and costs associated with housing troops in and around Boston.²⁰⁵ Even a cursory overview of the financial reports blatantly demonstrates that sending regulars to Boston was an extremely expensive decision – the logistical complexities and costliness of which only increased as the decade progressed and tensions escalated throughout the British Empire.

Fifteen battalions occupied North America between the frontier and the east coast from early 1768 until 1775. These men required, at minimum: lodging, food, uniforms, salaries, weapons, and medical services; their equipment required constant repair. While most funding went to food, upwards of 5% of the total cost of maintaining the army in Boston went to repairs

²⁰³ From *The Prince*: “If you choose armed forces instead of colonies, you will send more and will have to squander all the income from the new state to pay the army. This will turn the acquisition into a loss, and all your new subjects will end up offended, since an army, constantly on the move and constantly requartered, hurts the whole state. Everyone feels the pain, and everyone becomes your enemy.” Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Peter Constantine (New York: Random House), 11-12.

²⁰⁴ Shy, 329.

²⁰⁵ WO 4/86 contains more examples of expenses per diem for one battalion.

of barracks, weapons, and other equipment.²⁰⁶ The nominal yearly cost of rations for these fifteen battalions came to £22,000 pounds and spoilage, transportation, and other contingencies cost £68,000. Another £40,000 went to supporting the artillery battalions and other ordinance services independent of the other fifteen battalions. Finally, another £6,000 went to any other not inventoried expenses. In total, the British army brought roughly £300,000 sterling into the North American colonies per year and cost, at minimum, £90,000 pounds a year for basic sustainment. After all expenses are totaled, the presence of forces in North America drained roughly £400,000 pounds from the English Treasury each year.²⁰⁷

Adding to the expenses were the salaries of the colonial governors and other civil authorities – in theory all supported by the duty placed on tea imported to America but, in reality, given the colonial opposition to paying this duty, was actually funded by Parliament's dwindling purse. For example, to host the officials of just one court in the Massachusetts Bay, the Crown was responsible for £1400 a year.²⁰⁸ To pay the Governor of the Massachusetts Bay required another £1500 a year, an income that was, by law, untaxable.²⁰⁹

Soldier housing proved to be another constant logistical and economic problem for the British army in Boston. From the day they arrived in fall of 1768, General Gage faced trouble when considering how and where to quarter all of his troops. He immediately disclosed to Secretary Hillsborough that "...the expense of providing quarters is likely to fall upon the Crown."²¹⁰ The financial burden of North American operations was, therefore, already seen not one month into the deployment. By 1769, Gage's warning proved true when he relayed to the

²⁰⁶ Shy, 329-331.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 339-340.

²⁰⁸ In detail, salaries were as follows: £400 annum for the Chief Justice, £200 annum for each of the four associate judges, £150 annum for the attorney general, and £50 annum for the solicitor general. Hillsborough to the Lords of the Treasury, Example of salaries for the court of Massachusetts Bay, 27 July 1772, CO 2/520.

²⁰⁹ CO 2/520, December 1774.

²¹⁰ Gage to Hillsborough, No. 18, 10 October 1768, CO 5/86.

Colonial Secretary that, "The General Assembly of the Massachusetts Bay had peremptorily refused to repay the sums expended on account of the Crown for quartering His Majesty's Troops in that Province."²¹¹ Only one year into the deployment, it became clear to the Decision Makers that this would be a costly endeavor. Economic considerations only magnified when considering the state of the troop quarters.

Castle Island, just outside of the city of Boston, eventually became the primary quartering location. Yet, financial challenges arose even when using this preexisting fort. For most of the pre-War period, Soldiers lived in extremely poor conditions, housed in dilapidating garrisons, because no funding to repair the buildings.²¹² Many restorations needed to be completed to bring the makeshift barracks to livable standards. Three years into the Boston operations, repairs still occupied the minds of the Decision Makers. General Gage oft wrote to his commander, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, explaining conditions and requesting additional funding. Secretary Hillsborough, beginning to recognize the surmounting costs of the Crown's current engagement, wrote back to colonial leadership: "With regard to the repairs of and additional works at the Castle...I can only say that as what has been already done will, I perceive, make a very heavy Article into the Military Contingent Expenses of North America. It is very much to be wished that any further Demand might at present be avoided..."²¹³

1771 witnessed a trend towards a desire to limit spending from Whitehall and London. The War Office wrote to General Gage commanding a troop reduction and pay deduction in North America to alleviate some of the financial burden placed on the mother country.²¹⁴ This is important to note as this order, along with many others, suggests that the Crown was

²¹¹ Gage to Hillsborough, 23 July 1769, CO 5/87.

²¹² Shy, 330.

²¹³ Hillsborough to Governor Hutchinson, 01 April 1771, CO 5/765.

²¹⁴ Barrington to Gage, March 1771, WO 4/88.

concerned with the finances in the pre-War period. The economic strain likely played a larger role in the ultimate decision to go to war with the North American colonists than the usual narrative about the American Revolutionary War offers. As historian John Shy explains

The impact of economic activity was considerable, if difficult to describe precisely. Between 1768 and 1774, the principle money contractors carried about 94,000 pounds Sterling into North America annually for the payment of various 'extraordinary' expenses. In an economy with a chronic imbalance of payments and shortages of hard money, and with total annual reports of 2,000,000 pounds, this injection of specie was of some importance.²¹⁵

The costs of trade, maintaining a global empire, conducting military operations throughout North America, and attempting to support a civil authority in Boston became too much for the already weak British authority. Decision Makers, feeling this economic pressure, would have factored in these financial considerations when deciding the best course of action in North America.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

After eight years of volatile markets and stretched finances, English debt amounted to £245,000,000 million pounds.²¹⁶ The revenue accrued from taxes only comprised £12,000,000 – an amount too small to make a substantive difference amid the ever-increasing costs of the British Empire. A disconnect existed between British officials and the North American colonists. Decision Makers, concerned with domestic financial troubles, neglected to see, let alone understand, the colonial perspective. This was especially true when placing restrictive trade measures or duties on the subjects.²¹⁷ Essentially, being blinded by events exogenous to Boston and influenced by their own positions and personalities contributed to why those in power could not form a sufficient military strategy. From the weaknesses of protective nature of 18th century English mercantilism, to the economic crises catalyzed by the collapse of the East India

²¹⁵ Shy, 338.

²¹⁶ O'Shaughnessy, 76.

²¹⁷ Andrews, 221, 229.

Company and compounded by colonial uprisings, to the general costs of maintaining a global empire, the various financial burdens on the British economy proved too much. Though the military and political Decision Makers could not reach a strategic consensus, they could all agree on at least one fact – something needed to be done in North America to alleviate Great Britain of one financial stress. As historian Andrew O'Shaughnessy explains, "These royal colonies in America became, in a sense, pawns in the mercantilist game, living pawns, it is true, the welfare and producing power of which were to be carefully nurtured, but pawns nevertheless..." that gave Great Britain only two alternatives: "either to keep them in a state of dependence and to monopolize their trade; or else... 'to desert them and give them up to some neighbour to England's great loss and injury.'"²¹⁸ It is this dilemma over whether to continue to devote time, energy, and resources into North America or give the colonies up – via military force or otherwise – which permeated most conversations deliberating how to handle North America.

²¹⁸ Ibid, 335-336.

Conclusion

*“Invincibility lies in oneself. Vincibility lies in the enemy. Thus the skilled can make themselves invincible. They cannot cause the enemy’s vincibility.”*²¹⁹

The Loyalist soldiers stood at the position of attention awaiting orders from their commanding officer. The same anxiety, excitement, and sense of duty that lingered in the air when the large schooner arrived in Boston Harbor in 1768 loomed over the multiple British garrisons throughout Boston in mid-April of 1775. Rigid in their ranks, the Red Coats reflected on what they experienced within their area of operations over the last seven years. Directed attacks interspersed times of peace. Stability devolved to escalating tensions and later unthinkable violence between the colonists and the Regulars. Many wondered how and why it took General Gage this long to call the men to prepare for war against the rebellious colonists. Little did they know that back in London, competing personalities, global threats, and economic troubles consumed the last seven years. For the men who served in Boston from the very beginning, they witnessed their overarching mission in North America shift from stability and civil support to forceful and offensive suppression at all levels. It seemed as though the Crown would no longer tolerate insurrection. The eve of War was finally upon them.

Meanwhile, the military and political Decision Makers exchanged correspondence. From 3000 miles away in Whitehall, Secretary Dartmouth wrote to General Gage’s chain of command. The events in Boston had become too much. The Colonial Secretary, asserting that the “Inhabitants of that Town” suffered from a “Madness,” proceeded to order the Commander in Chief to “make the necessary preparations, which as much Silence and Secrecy as possible, for marching upon the first Requisition, to Boston...”²²⁰ The order had been given. Troops were to be reallocated from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania to bolster His Majesty’s forces for

²¹⁹ Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*.

²²⁰ Dartmouth to Haldimand, 09 March 1775, CO 5/95.

an impending attack on his North American subjects. Over twenty battalions occupied the King's North American holdings from Canada down to the Floridas at the beginning of 1775.²²¹ These were originally posted to maintain the peace throughout this part of the British Empire; however, Crown made the decision – the King and his administration willingly accepted the risk of reorganizing the British Forces if it meant indefinitely crushing the insurrection spreading from the Massachusetts Bay.

Controversial as it may have been, Secretary Dartmouth, optionless, concluded by giving the power to the military to “act as Occasion shall require” in March 1775.²²² Then, on the 15 April 1775, only four days before the fateful battles in Lexington and Concord, General Gage received another set of orders from the Secretary of State. In it, Dartmouth ordered the Commander of the Regulars to take measures that appear “most effectual for suppressing, by a vigorous exertion of your Force, that Rebellion, which, if not timely and effectually resisted must end in the total subversion of all Government.”²²³ Just as in 1768, supporting the execution of the laws weighed on the minds of the Decision Makers in Whitehall. This time, however, military force was an option. Upon receipt of the packet, General Gage and his officers followed orders and prepared the men to march on Concord.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A spectrum of hawks and doves, some resolute and some wavering, comprised British leadership in the prelude to the American War of Independence. By 1775, King George appeared conflicted in his conclusion of the necessity of military force. Lord North remained susceptible to various political pressures yet tried to espouse a peaceful solution. The Earl of Dartmouth

²²¹ “Disposition of the Forces in North America, including the Regiments under Order for Boston,” February 1775, WO 4/93.

²²² Dartmouth to Haldimand, 09 March 1775, CO 5/95.

²²³ Dartmouth to Gage, 15 April 1775, CO 5/765.

emerged confident that offensive action was not the appropriate course of action. Lastly, General Gage expressed continued uncertainty about what to do in his area of operations. The combination of the personalities of the political and military Decision Makers, European powers threatening the British Empire, and the economic hardships facing the English economy created the perfect storm to distract the Decision Makers from constructing a cohesive military strategy in North America from 1768 to 1775. Lack of strategy proved to be the fatal oversight which triggered the evolution of the initial military orders to “support and protect the Civil Magistrates, and the Officers of His Majesty’s Revenue” in their “preservation of the publick Peace, and the due Execution of the Laws” to ones advocating offensive actions in New England.

Perhaps, had the Decision Makers effectively followed through with their deployment of military force to Boston in 1768, one of the rare moments in which the prelude to the American War of Independence witnessed strategic cohesion, and acted preemptively against the budding violence in the Massachusetts Bay, then the Crown may have avoided a costly war and maintained his North American holdings.²²⁴ However, by the time a cohesive strategy was temporarily agreed upon in 1774 with the adoption of the Coercive Acts, it was too late to change the course of action unfolding in Boston. The subjects had already resigned themselves to violence and were ready to do whatever it took to cast off the imperial chains of King George III.

Though Great Britain ultimately lost the American War of Independence, thus enabling history to forever codify it as the American Revolution, insightful lessons about strategy and decision making and, more generally, the causes of conflict can be gleaned from the empire’s

²²⁴ Machiavelli expands on this theory. He hypothesizes that “You must never allow disorder to develop in an attempt to avoid war, as this way you are not escaping war, but simply postponing it to your own disadvantage” (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Peter Constantine (New York: Random House), 15-16). Great Britain allowed for disorder to develop and continue in the Massachusetts Bay instead of suppressing insurrection outright. This trepid inaction laid the groundwork for the escalation of force from both sides over the seven-year period in which British Regulars occupied Boston.

crushing defeat. An analysis of the pre-war period demonstrates that the Decision Makers failed to create a shared understanding amongst themselves when planning operations in North America. I assess that this failure was a result of being distracted by myriad events throughout the British Empire. While hypothesizing the reason for failure to create a strategy and appropriately plan is important, what is more important is noting the effects of this failure. The inability of the Decision Makers to communicate and establish a cohesive plan led to war – a war which ended with the loss of Great Britain's North American holdings. The globe perceived the British Empire as invincible. However, the leadership from 1768 to 1775 exposed British vulnerability; thereby allowing their American subjects to make themselves invincible at the mercy of England.

Constantly shifting individual and collective strategies for North America enabled a stability mission to aid the civil authorities in execution of the laws and uphold the public peace, motivated by the notion that the “Civil Magistrate alone who must stand responsible for the Peace of the Town of Boston,” to devolve into a desperate use of suppressive military force.²²⁵ Operation failures such as this need to be studied as stability operations did not end in 1775. Rather, militaries around the world continue to engage in operations with mission sets very similar to the orders given to General Thomas Gage by the Colonial Secretary in the summer of 1768. If contemporary leaders are to look to history to mitigate the potential for mistakes, they need look no further than the actions of the British political and military Decision Makers in the Revolutionary Era to see the importance of cohesive strategy formation and decision making in conflict prevention. One major reason stability can fail, or so it seems based on the prelude to the American War of Independence, is due to the human dimension of warfare. People contain

²²⁵ Hillsborough to Bernard, 30 July 1768, 5/765.

biases, distractions are inevitable, and personalities play a role. The human aspect of conflict can prevent the creation of a cohesive strategy and, therefore, unintentionally alter a course of action to a point where the only viable option seems armed violence.

The human dimension of warfare indeed drove operations in America for the seven years before the American War of Independence that His Majesty's Troops occupied the territory. Misaligned personal motivations and visions dominated the planning and decision making process. Historian John Shy proposes that:

For those at the highest level of government, policy and honor were becoming hopelessly confused with one another. The honor of the army, virtually penned up inside Boston by fear of a rabble that had proved its cowardice and indiscipline during the last war, was at issue; thus, by extension, the honor of the king, of the nobility, and even of the "nation" were involved.²²⁶

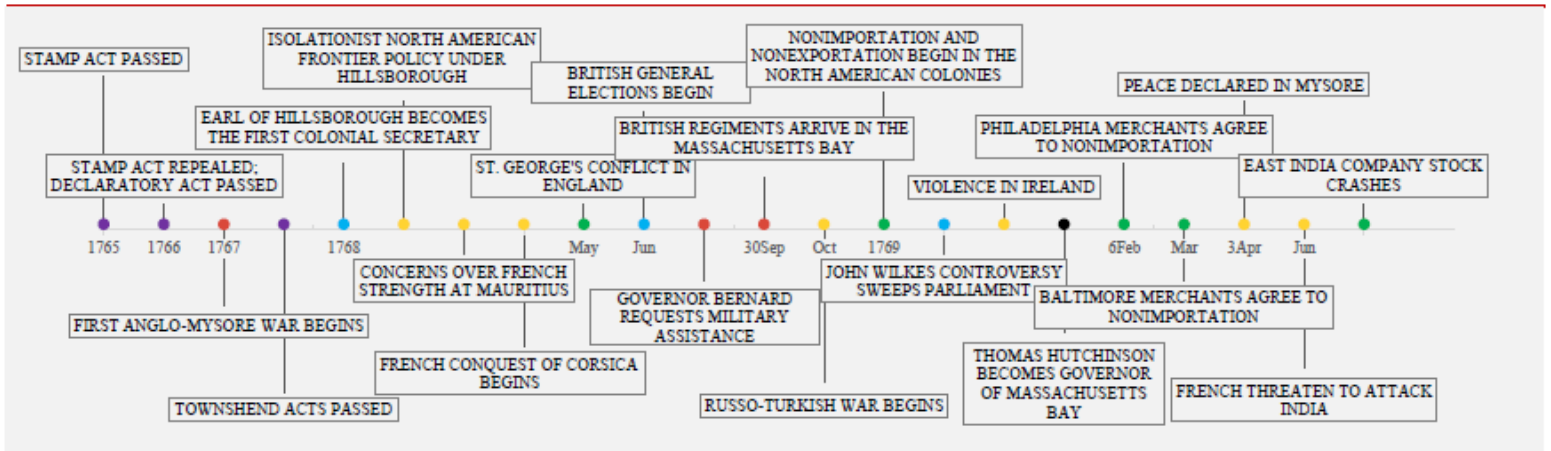
Compromise and communication therefore became impossible as the Decision Makers grew more resolute in their visions for New England strategy. Geopolitical threats and economic strain only exacerbated the growing tensions and Ministerial divides as people lobbied for resources. Clearly, the Decision Makers were not passively reacting to events unfolding in North America. Rather, correspondences and addresses highlight that Boston and the North American colonies, at large, were low on the priority list for British political and military leaders amid the exogenous threats to the Crown's imperial authority. Within this analysis of competing demands obfuscating cohesive strategy among national leaders lies the other side of the story of the coming of the American War of Independence.

²²⁶ Shy, "Weak Link of the Empire," 26.

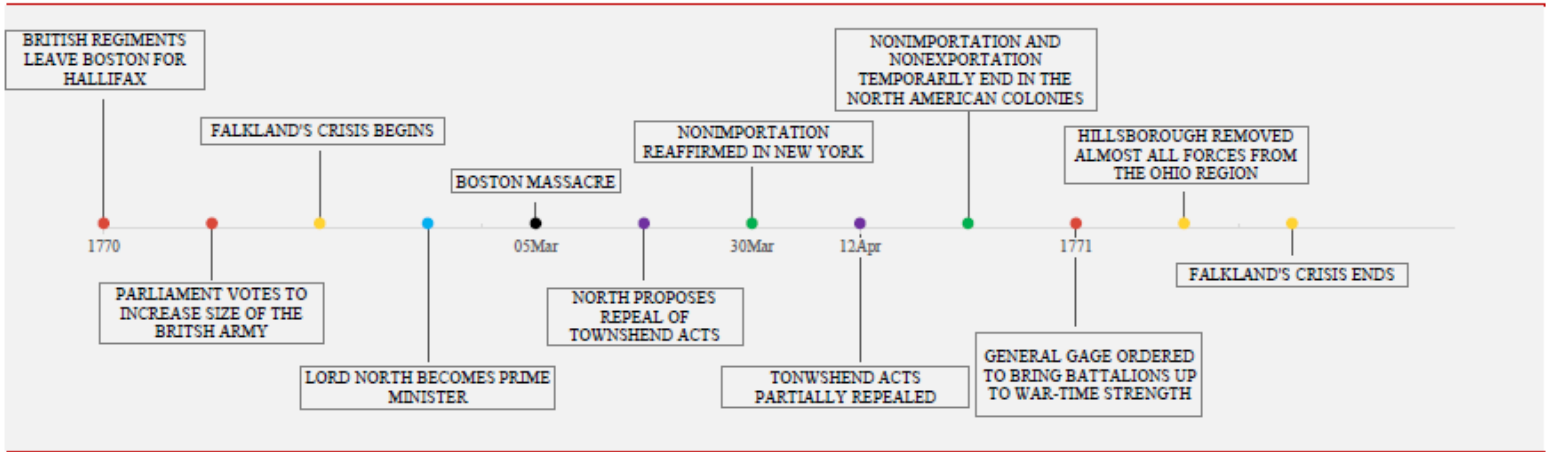
WHEN PERSONALITIES DOMINATE, STABILITY FAILS: GREAT BRITAIN'S CHANGING NORTH AMERICAN MILITARY STRATEGY, 1768-1775

Timeline, 1768-1775

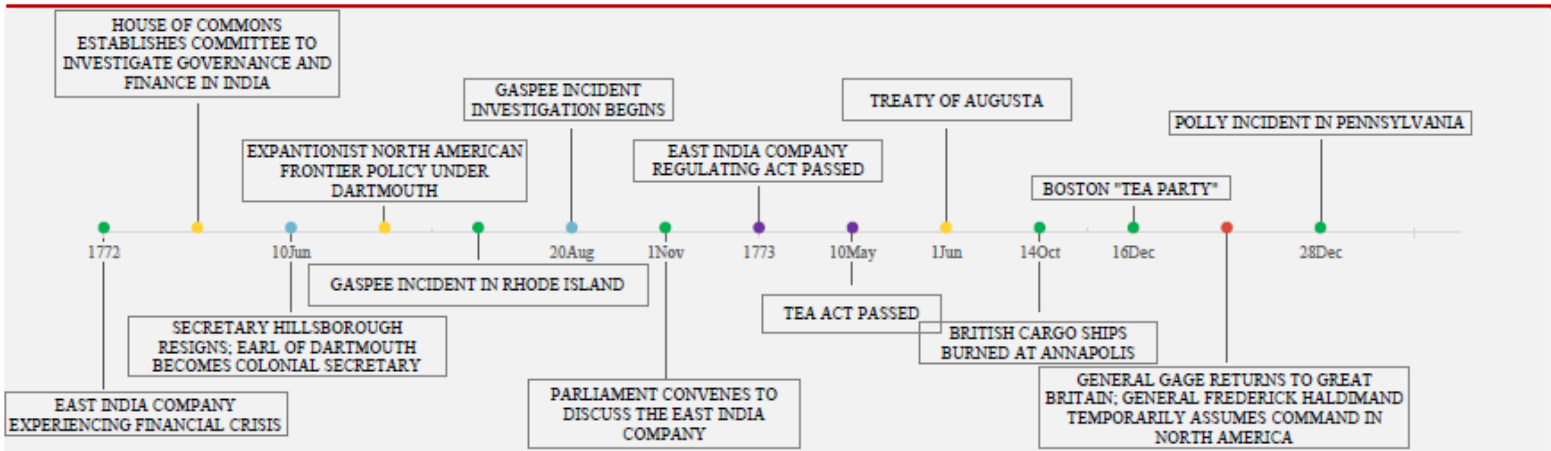
1767-1769



1770-1771

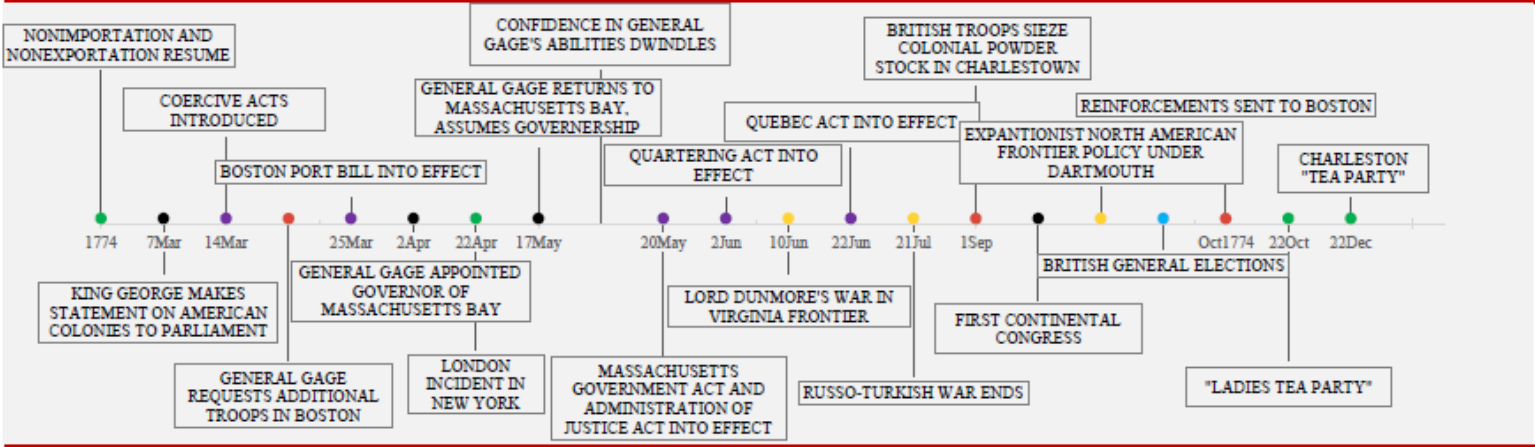


1772-1773

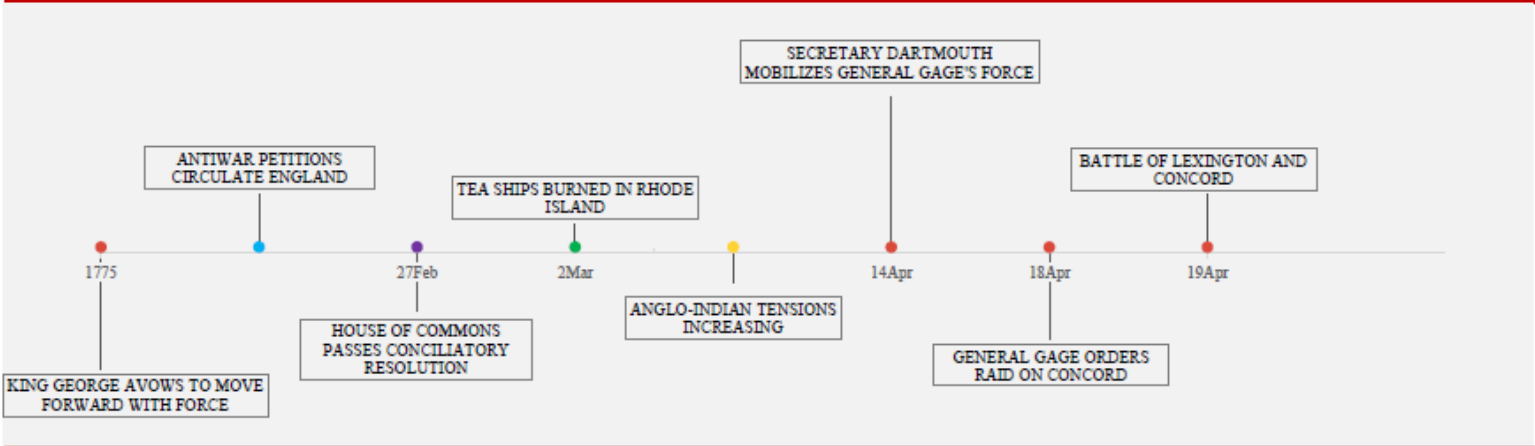


WHEN PERSONALITIES DOMINATE, STABILITY FAILS: GREAT BRITAIN'S CHANGING NORTH AMERICAN MILITARY STRATEGY, 1768-1775

1774



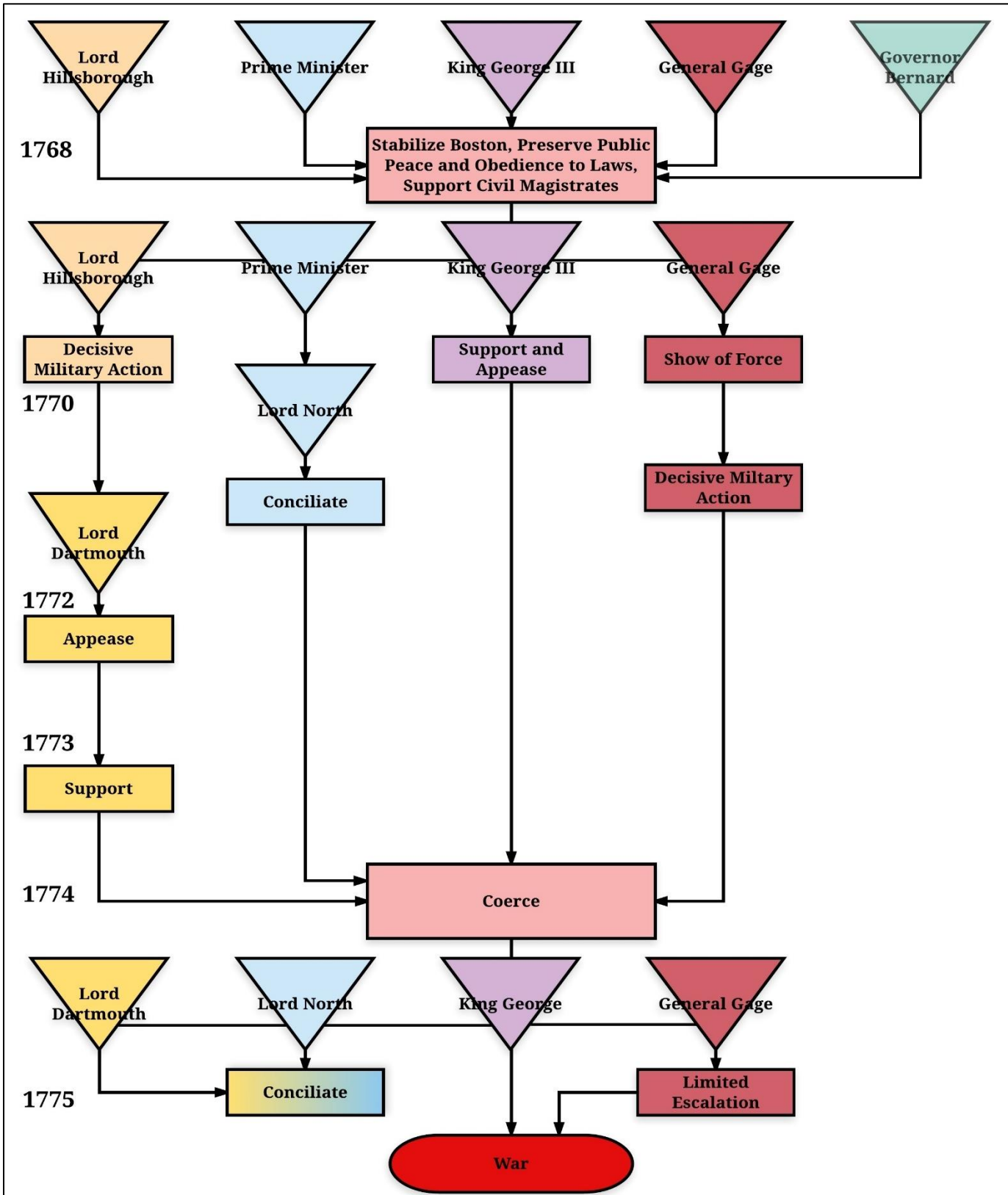
1775



Appendix 1. Timeline of events throughout the British Empire from 1768-1775. The timeline highlights notable events addressed in this thesis. Light blue circles represent domestic political events; red circles represent military orders; purple circles represent legislation; green circles represent economic events; gold circles represent geopolitical events; black circles represent events specific to the Massachusetts Bay.

WHEN PERSONALITIES DOMINATE, STABILITY FAILS: GREAT BRITAIN'S CHANGING NORTH AMERICAN MILITARY STRATEGY, 1768-1775

Shifts in Strategy by Decision Maker



Appendix 2. Map of shifts in strategy by each Decision Makers from 1768-1775. This map portrays the diversity of opinions and lack of overall shared understanding and strategy regarding how to handle the North American colonies. Colors and triangles delineate each Decision Maker. Rectangles delineate a strategic choice. The oval represents the start to the American War of Independence with the march on Concord on 19 April 1775.

Empire Events and Relative Magnitude of Distraction



Appendix 3. Map of events throughout the British Empire from 1768-1775 and their corresponding magnitude of distraction on the Decision Makers. Larger, darker circles represent a greater impact on Decision Makers' focus and strategic cohesion while smaller, lighter circles represent a lesser impact. Circles represent both security and economic threats. Great Britain maintained a military presence at each of these locations throughout the period preceding the American War of Independence.

Bibliography

- “A Circumstantial Account of an Attack that Happened on the 19th of April 1775, on his Majesty’s Troops By a Number of the People of the Province of Massachusetts Bay.” Richmond: The National Archives (TNA).
- Andrews, Charles M. *The Colonial Period of American History: England’s Commercial and Colonial Policy*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938.
- Bargar, B. D. *Lord Dartmouth and the American Revolution*. Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press, 1965.
- Baugh, Daniel A. “Withdrawing from Europe: Anglo-French Maritime Geopolitics, 1750-1800.” *The International History Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1. Pp. 1-32. Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 1998.
- Beyond the American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism*. Alfred F. Young. ed. DeKalb: University of Northern Illinois Press, 1993.
- Black, Jeremy. *Parliament and Foreign Policy in the Eighteenth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Blainey, Geoffrey. *The Causes of War*. Third Edition. New York: The Free Press, 1988.
- “Boston Port Act.” Richmond: The National Archives (TNA).
- Bowen, Hugh. “British Conceptions of the Global Empire, 1756-1783.” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 26, No. 3. 1998: 6, 10, 13.
- Bowen, H.V. *The Business of Empire: The East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1883*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Breen, T.H. “Baubles of Britain: The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century.” *Past & Present*, No. 119. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988.
- Brinton, Crane. “The Anatomy of Revolution.” 1938.
- “British Economic Growth, 1270-1820,”
<http://www.lse.ac.uk/economicHistory/seminars/ModernAndComparative/papers2011-12/Papers/Broadberry.pdf>.
- Broadberry, Stephen and Bas van Leeuwen, “British Economic Growth and the Business Cycle, 1700-1800: Annual Estimates,”
<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/staff/sbroadberry/wp/annualgdp9.pdf>.

Calloway, Colin G. *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Churchill, Winston S. *A History of the English Speaking Peoples: The Age of Revolution*. New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1957.

“Conciliatory Resolution.” Lord North. American Archives.

Clark, Dora Mae. *British Opinion and the American Revolution*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930.

Dartmouth, Earl of. “Memoirs of the Right Honourable the Earl of Dartmouth, Lord Privy Seal of England.” *The Edinburgh Magazine, or, Literary Amusement*, 1779-1782; 50, British Periodicals, 133. Nov 9, 1780.

Davis, Ralph. *A Commercial Revolution: English Overseas Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. London, 1967.

Davis, Ralph. *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1915.

Dupuy, Trevor N. and Gay M. Hammerman. *People & Events of the American Revolution*. New York: R.R. Bowker Company, 1974.

DuVal, Kathleen. *Independence Lost: Lives on the Edge of the American Revolution*. New York: Random House, 2015.

Fleming, James. *Thomas Gage*. New York: Vintage, 2004.

Goebel, Julius Jr. *The struggle for the Falkland Islands, a Study in Legal and Diplomatic History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927.

Gruber, Ira D. “The Origins of British Strategy in the War for American Independence.” *Military History of the American Revolution*, edited by Major Stanley J. Underdal, 38-52. Colorado: United States Air Force Academy, 1976.

Hargreaves, Reginald. *The Bloodybacks: The British Serviceman in North America and the Caribbean 1655-1783*. London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1968.

Hillsborough. “Memoirs of the Right Honourable the Earl of Hillsborough.” *London Magazine, or Gentlemen's Monthly Intelligencer*, 1747-1783; 50. British Periodicals, 1781.

Jasanoff, Maya. “The Other Side of the Revolution: Loyalists in the British Empire.” *The William and Mary Quarterly*. Third Series, Vol. 65, No. 2. Williamsburg: The College of William and Mary, 2008.

Jesse, John Heneage. *Memoirs of the Life and Reign of King George the Third*. Vol. I. London: Tinsley Brothers, 1867.

Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning*. Washington, DC: Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. 2011.

Kierner, Cynthia. *Revolutionary America, 1750-1815: Sources and Interpretation*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003.

Labaree, Benjamin Woods. *The Boston Tea Party*. New York: Oxford Press, 1964.

Levy, Jack and William Thompson. *Causes of War*. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

"Lords Journals," 24NOV1767-25SEP1770, Vol. 32, 8 GEO. III-10 GEO III, HL/PO/JO/2/32

"Lords Journals," 13NOV1770-23NOV1773, Vol. 33, 11 GEO. III-14 GEO III, HL/PO/JO/2/33

"Lords Journals," 13JAN1774-15OCT1776, Vol. 34, 11 GEO. III-14 GEO III, HL/PO/JO/2/34

Machiavelli, *The Prince*. Peter Constantine, ed. New York: Random House.

Marshall, P.J. *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, and America c. 17650-1783*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

McConville, Brendan. *The King's Three Faces: The Rise & Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776*. Virginia: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Millett, Allan R. and Peter Maslowski. "The American Revolution, 1763-1783." *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America*. New York: The Free Press, 1994

Minchinton, W.E., ed. *The Growth of English Overseas Trade in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. London, 1969.

Montesquieu, "Spirit of the Laws."

North, Lord. "The Prime Minister: A Personal Memoir. I" *The North American Review*. Vol, 176. No. 558. Cedar Falls: University of Northern Iowa, 1903.

North, Lord. "The Prime Minister: A Personal Memoir. I" *The North American Review*. Vol, 177. No. 561. Cedar Falls: University of Northern Iowa, 1903.

O'Shaughnessy, Andrew Jackson. *The Men Who Lost America*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013.

- O'Brien, Patrick. "The Political Economy of British Taxation, 1660-1815." *Economic History Review*, 2d ser., 41. No. 1. 1988: I-32.
- Pearson, Michael. *Those Damned Rebels: The American Revolution as Seen through British Eyes*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1972.
- Ritcheson, Charles R. *British Politics and the American Revolution*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954.
- Rowland, John Kenneth. "General Thomas Gage, the Eighteenth-Century Literature of Military Intelligence, and the Transition from Peace to Revolutionary War, 1774 to 1775," *Historical Reflections*, Vol. 32, No. 3. *Crossing the Border - Expanding the Enlightenment*, pp. 503-521. New York: Berghann Books, 2006.
- Rush, Michael. *Parliamentary Government in Britain*. New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1981.
- Saunt, Claudio. *West of the Revolution: An Uncommon History of 1776*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014.
- Scott, H. M. *British foreign policy in the age of the American Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990.
- Shy, John. *Towards Lexington: The Role of the British Army in the Coming of the American Revolution*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965.
- Shy, John. "Weak Link of the Empire." Billias, George Athan, ed. *George Washington's Generals and Opponents: Their Exploits and Leadership*. Boston: Da Capo Press, 1994.
- Simms, Brendan. *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire, 1714-1783*. New York: Basic Books, 2009.
- Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Denma Translation Group, trans. Boston: Shambhala, 2009.
- Sutherland, Lucy. *The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1952.
- The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, 1763-1775*. Vol. 1. Clarence Edwin Carter, ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931.
- The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State, and with the War Office and the Treasury, 1763-1775*. Vol. 2. Clarence Edwin Carter, ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1933.

The Correspondence of King George the Third from 1760 to December 1783. Vol 2. 1768 -June 1773. John Fortescue, ed. London: MacMillan and Co., 1927.

The Correspondence of King George the Third from 1760 to December 1783. Vol 3. July 1773-December 1777. John Fortescue, ed. London: MacMillan and Co., 1928.

The Correspondence of King George the Third with Lord North, 1768-1783. Vol. 1. Bodham Donne, ed. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1867.

The Manuscripts of the Earl of Dartmouth. Vol 1. Eleventh Report, Appendix, Part V. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1887.

The Manuscripts of the Earl of Dartmouth. Vol 2. "American Papers." Fourteenth Report, Appendix, Part X. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1895.

The Manuscripts of the Earl of Dartmouth. Vol 3. Fifteenth Report, Appendix, Part I. London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1896.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/27.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/29.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/30.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/86.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/87.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/91.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/92.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/167.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/233.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/234.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/235.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/243.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/246.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/250.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/759.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/760.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/761.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/762.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/763.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/765.

The National Archives (TNA): CO 5/768.

The National Archives (TNA): WO 1/7.

The National Archives (TNA): WO 1/8.

The National Archives (TNA): WO 1/9.

The National Archives (TNA): WO 4/86.

The National Archives (TNA): WO 4/87.

The National Archives (TNA): WO 4/88.

The National Archives (TNA): WO 4/89.

The National Archives (TNA): WO 4/90.

The National Archives (TNA): WO 4/92.

The National Archives (TNA): WO 4/93.

The Price of Loyalty: Tory Writings from the Revolutionary Era. Crary, Catherine. ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973.

Thomas, P.D.G. *Tea Party to Independence: The Third Phase of the American Revolution, 1773-1776.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Walpole, Horace. *Memoirs of the Reign of King George the Third.* Vol. 2. Sir Denis le Marchant, ed. Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845.

Watkin, Kenneth. "Stability Operations: A Guiding Framework for 'Small Wars' and Other Conflicts of the Twenty-First Century?" *The War in Afghanistan: A Legal Analysis.*

WHEN PERSONALITIES DOMINATE, STABILITY FAILS: GREAT BRITAIN'S CHANGING NORTH AMERICAN MILITARY STRATEGY, 1768-1775

Michael N. Schmidt. ed. *International Law Studies*. Vol. 85. Newport: U.S. Naval War College, 2009.

Wickwire, Franklin B. *British Subministers and Colonial America, 1763-1783* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966.

Wood, Gordon S. *The American Revolution: A History*. New York: Modern Library, 2003.

Wood, Gordon S. *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992.